

Redefining violence

The securitisation and desecuritisation of farm attacks
in post-Apartheid South Africa.



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ABSTRACT

This thesis reconstructs and analyses the rural security policies from the post-apartheid South African government, from February 1997 to March 2017. Using securitisation theory, it explains how organised agriculture, based on their own statistics and perception of political motivated violence, successfully gained extraordinary security measures to protect white commercial farmers. It argues that the government compiled their own statistics on these incidents, which in 2003 proved to be predominantly robberies victimising other groups, as well. As common crime, the group to be protected grew to include workers, families and visitors on farms and smallholdings. Due to the historical and social context, the issue was desecuritized in 2011 by the government as incidents of common crime targeting the whole rural community. This must be seen as desecuritisation through rearticulation as the government redefined both the threat and the group to be protected, declining the numbers of attacks through normal policing. This rearticulation proved strong enough to withstand new attempts to securitise the acts of violence against the farming community. Nevertheless, representative institutions of the farming community still claim, based on their own statistics and perceptions, that the violence is still in part politically motivated, demanding more security as the threat remains. This could be seen as effective desecuritisation through silencing, proving that desecuritisation theory is open for interpretation.

Keywords: South Africa, securitisation, desecuritisation, violence, post-apartheid, farmers, farm attacks, farm murders, plaasmoorde.

'The solution to the problem of farm killings must emerge from all of us. I am convinced that any political differences notwithstanding, this is one issue on which we can speak with one voice. I am of the view that even if at times the chorus may have been discordant, we are singing the same song.

- **President Mandela, 1998**

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3 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFSA	– Action Stop Farm Attacks
Agri SA	– Agri South Africa
ANI	– AfriForum Navorsing Institute
APLA	– Azanian People’s Liberation Army
ANC	– African National Congress
CIAC	– Crime and Information Analysis Centre
FF Plus	– Freedom Front Plus
HRW	– Human Rights Watch
MK	– Umkhonto we Sizwe
NICOC	– National Intelligence Coordinating Commission
NOCOC	– National Operational Committee
NIA	– National Intelligence Agency
PAC	– Pan African Congress of Azania
RPP	– Rural Protection Plan
RSS	– Rural Safety Strategy
SAAU	– South African Agricultural Union
SADF	– South African Defence Force (during apartheid)
SAHRC	– South African Human Rights Commission
SANDF	– South African National Defence Force (post-apartheid)
SAP	– South African Police (during apartheid)
SAPS	– South African Police Service (post-apartheid)
TAU SA	– Transvaal Agricultural Union South Africa

4 INTRODUCTION

4.1 FOREWORD

In a letter to the South African Speaker of Parliament, Baleka Mbete, a debate on farm attacks and murders was pleaded for by Dr Pieter Groenewald, leader of the political party Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus), on 16 February 2017 (VF Plus 2017a). In this letter, he spoke of the four people who were found murdered on their farm with gunshot wounds to the head, earlier that week (News 24 2017). According to Dr Groenewald, the number of farmers killed that month reached eleven during thirty attacks, meaning two attacks occurred every day. Groenewald claimed that “there has been a serious increase in the number of farm attacks and farm murders in the last couple of years, as well as the brutality accompanying many of these attacks. Despite this, our national police services have not succeeded in their duty to safeguard rural areas and, in particular, the farming community” (VF Plus 2017a). He continued that seventy farmers were killed during 345 farm attacks in 2016. Aside from the impact their deaths have on their families and communities, “farm attacks affect every South African” (Ibidem). Almost one million people are employed in the agricultural sector, contributing seven percent to the GDP. “It will, therefore, have serious ramifications for the security of the country, not only in terms of food security but also the stability in our labour market and our economic development” (Ibidem). He concludes the letter by urging the Speaker “to allow this parliament to urgently discuss this matter to ensure that the executive takes cognisance of the urgency required implementing measures to address this tragedy” (Ibidem).

Three days later, on 19 February, British nationals Sue Howarth and her husband Robert Lynn, were asleep in their farmhouse, when two shots were fired. Two men entered the bedroom and assaulted Mr Lynn, after which he offered them the little cash he had, as well as his bank card and pin code. The men refused and burned him with a blow torch from his feet up to his legs and on his stomach. Mr Lynn’s face was then covered with a plastic bag, and he was thrown into the back of a *bakkie* – a pickup truck – where he could bite an airhole into the bag. After Mrs Howarth was thrown next to him, the attackers drove away from the farm before forcing Mr Lynn to walk into the bush, after which he was shot in the back of the neck. He survived, but his unconscious wife laid next to the road with multiple skull fractures, burn wounds and a plastic bag shoved down her throat. Both victims were taken to the hospital where doctors discovered bullets lodged in Mr Lynn’s neck and Mrs Howarth’s head. Mrs Howarth never regained consciousness as her life support was switched off on 21 February (Middelburg Observer 2017a, 2017b, The Telegraph 2017, 2017b).

Later that week, Dr Groenewald of the FF Plus received a response from the Speaker. According to Mrs Mbete, farm attacks were not urgent enough, or of sufficient national interest as she

argued that “farm attacks are a serious issue, but that it does not justify an immediate debate” (VF Plus 2017b). The month February would eventually see sixteen murders in forty farm attacks, the most farm murders in a single month since 1990.¹

The contrast with twenty years earlier is stark. In 1998, it was president Mandela who urged at the Summit on Rural Safety and Security that “we must stop these murders at once. And we must act together in doing so, for there is no other way to succeed” (Mandela Archives 1998). Evidentially, the way to success has not been found yet, as the murders on farmers and their community continue to this day. What has changed however, is the government’s response to this particular occurrence of violence. It was in national interest to act against the attacks and murders on the farming community in 1997, but not sufficient enough to allow a debate in parliament on the same issue twenty years later. To understand this, it is important to reconstruct and analyse the processes that allowed this shift in policy to provide security to these communities.

4.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

As this research attempts to reconstruct and analyse the period between 1997 and 2017, it will use the following research question:

How have the processes of securitisation and desecuritisation determined the government policy against farm attacks in post-Apartheid South Africa.

To answer this research question, the following sub questions have been formulated:

How did the process of securitization initially unfold in 1997-1998?

How did the 2003 Report of the Committee of Inquiry affect the perception of farm attacks?

How was the customised policy gradually dismantled from 2003 to 2011?

What form of desecuritisation can be identified by this dismantling?

4.3 THE TERMINOLOGY OF FARM ATTACKS

As this thesis covers twenty years, the definition of farm attacks has been redefined multiple times by different state and non-state institutions. As will be made clear in this thesis, the term ‘farm attack’ has an attributed implication behind it. This thesis is written in full awareness of this implication and refrains from any political or subjective stance by using either incidents or acts of violence on farms

¹ Author’s interview with Loraine Claasen, a criminologist from the AfriForum Navorsings Institute, on 27 March 2017.

and smallholdings, as they are commonly referred to today. The term 'farm attack' is limited to the historical context when they were referred to as such, as well as to those who continue to refer to them in such a manner today. However, since the implication of the term farm attack played an important element in the initial process it will be referred to as such in the research question.

4.4 THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis will start with this introduction, in which the research question, academic significance as well as the methodology used for this thesis will be explained. The next chapter will discuss the theoretical framework with which the securitisation and desecuritisation of farm attacks will be analysed. In this chapter, the Copenhagen School will be introduced and their framework will be explained. An emphasis will be laid on the concept of desecuritisation, after which the shortcomings will be explained. As one of the valued critiques is the need for context, the next chapter will be used to provide the necessary context to understand the historical and social context, with an emphasis on the militarisation of South African society after 1976.

The second part of the thesis will be used to reconstruct and analyse the processes of securitisation and desecuritisation. In the fourth chapter, the initial process leading up to the security measures will be analysed, as well as the implementation of said security measures. This chapter will roughly span from the political transition in 1994 to 1997. The fifth chapter will be formed around the 2003 Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Farm Attacks and how it changed the perception of farm attacks. The sixth chapter will discuss how starting from 2003, the customised policy after the initial securitisation was gradually dismantled until 2011, when it will be argued that the desecuritisation was completed. This will lead to the seventh chapter, in which the desecuritisation of farm attacks will be analysed, and showed what the perception of the issue is in 2017. The eighth and final chapter of this thesis will be the conclusion of this thesis, which will formulate an answer to the research question.

4.5 ACADEMIC SIGNIFICANCE

The main academic significance of this thesis is twofold. The first contribution is of historical significance. To clarify, this work does not pretend to be a definitive work on the nature or scale of the incidents on South African farms and smallholdings. Nor will it pretend to cover all aspects and all role-players involved. Above all, it does not pretend to take a normative stand on how farm attacks should be perceived. It will, however, put the incidents, and particularly the policies of the South African government in regard of this issue, in historical perspective. In this regard, it hopes to contribute to the body of literature on this issue, which is almost non-existent outside of South Africa.

The second contribution is of theoretical significance as it contributes empirical research to the theory

of securitisation, further elaborated upon in the next chapter. One of the critiques on the Copenhagen School is that it has “so far primarily concentrated on framing a theoretical approach to security studies while paying insufficient needs to empirical research” (Emmers 2007, 116). According to Emmers, there has not been enough empirical research on why some moves of securitisation succeed and other fail, and on why some threats are perceived as existential while others not. “Empirical studies on the path that leads to the securitization of public issues might lead to a better understanding of the transition from the politicized to the securitized end of the spectrum and vice versa” (Ibidem). This empirical research sees an issue transition from the nonpoliticised to the politicised, to the securitised, and back to the politicised through desecuritisation, making it an interesting empirical case to analyse. As Hansen identifies, desecuritisation has an underdeveloped status within the securitisation-desecuritisation nexus (Hansen 2012, 527). This thesis contributes to the empirical application of the desecuritisation framework, as well test the ideal types of desecuritisation as given by Hansen. Thus, this thesis aims to analyse this issue in historical perspective through to identify the processes of securitisation and desecuritisation.

4.6 METHODOLOGY

Since this research is qualitative by nature, the methodology consists of three pillars. Namely, document based research, secondary literature research and fieldwork.

First, document based research consisted of the various official reports and documents by various organisations on this issue, including the government and organisations, such as the Human Rights Watch, organised agriculture and the civil rights organisation AfriForum. In order to be included in this research, these organisations needed to be credible and reliable. While international organisations had their international reputation to constitute them as credible, national organisations were judged on the willingness of the government to accept them as legitimate representatives of their target group. Further document research consisted of news reports of the past twenty years to illustrate the perceptions of this issue. All news reports used in this thesis include either examples of violent incidents of farm attacks or official statements by representatives of identified role-players. To clarify, these reports are used to provide the necessary context. While some examples of incidents used are violent excesses and not representative for these incidents in the general sense, these reports contributed to the perception of the general public as this thesis will prove. All news reports used were written in English, by either international or South African news sites.

Secondly, the use of secondary literature contributed to a better understanding of the historical and social context of South Africa in general, and the issue of the violent incidents on farms and smallholdings in particular. The literature used will be further elaborated upon in the literature review.

Thirdly, the fieldwork conducted for this research consisted of an eight-week period in South Africa from March 2017 to May 2017. Most of the research was conducted in the Gauteng province, in particular the administrative capital of Pretoria, since the headquarters of the identified role-players were based in and near this city, as well as two universities where academics were willing to provide further context, literature and documents. In this period, research has been conducted on additional; documents and secondary literature which were unavailable in The Netherlands. As part of this fieldwork, interviews were conducted with various representatives of institutions that were identified as role-players in the processes of securitisation and desecuritisation, with institutions that could provide further context and documents as well as academics from the University of Pretoria and the University of South Africa. Interviews were conducted on a semi-structured basis and specific to the institution that these interviewees represent.

4.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

It is important to note that little to none academic attention has been paid to the issue of attacks on farms and smallholdings outside of South Africa. Therefore, this research will predominantly be based on empirical literature. The academic research that does focus on the farm attacks mainly contributes to the academic debate considering the motivation behind the violence (Haefele 1998, Moolman 2000a, Moolman 2000b), the investigation and conviction of the perpetrators (Mistry 2006), to gain a theoretical perspective on the issue (Swart 2003, Strydom and Schutte 2015), to create an overview of the issue and the potential impact on society (Bezuidenhout 2012), the perception of the victims (Olivier and Cunninham 2006, Hornschuh 2007), the psychological effects on the victims (Claasen 2012a) and the level of brutality during these acts of violence (Claasen 2012b). They do, however, provide a solid base of background information and context to build this research upon. This is further augmented by the literature covered by the 2003 *Report of the Committee of Inquiry* which gives literature preceding 2001 covering a wide range of topics concerning farm attacks, including summaries of government reports (Committee of Inquiry 2003). Further relevant sources included those used for context on the rural security (Gastrow and Shaw 2001) (Human Rights Watch 2001) (Manby 2002) (SAHRC 2015), including the commando (Schönteich and Steinberg 2000) (J. Steinberg 2005a) (Steinberg 2005b) (Twala and Oelofse 2013) and the priorities (Burrger 2012a).

To provide the historical context, *The History of South Africa* from the American historian Beck will be used, as he was able to provide a good detailed overview while keeping it comprehensible for a non South African (Beck 2013).

Official speeches came from the government archives (Mandela Archives 1998, South African Government 2003, Parliament of South Africa 2017).

All figures used in this thesis can be traced back to its original source. Original figures were used to create own charts for comparative purposes.

5 THEORY

In this chapter, the theoretical framework for this thesis will be explained. Firstly, the Copenhagen School will be introduced, the original developers of the concepts of securitisation and desecuritisation. Secondly, their analytical framework to analyse how an issue becomes securitised will be explained. Thirdly, the concept of desecuritisation will be further elaborated upon using the ideal types as given by Hansen. Lastly, the shortcomings of and critiques on the Copenhagen School will be identified.

5.1 SECURITY AS A CONCEPT

Security as a concept is hard to define. “Security means different things to different societies, as the core fears of any group of nation are unique and relate to vulnerabilities and historical experiences” (Wæver, 1989b in Vuori 2017, 66). Security tends to be something positive, “as being or feeling safe from harm and danger” (Vuori 2017, 66). Rather than elaborating on different concepts of security, the vulnerability related to security in this thesis will be the fear of becoming victim of the acts of violence with the intent to murder, rape, rob or inflict bodily harm as portrayed in the foreword. “A crucial element in the way security works (...) is that different forms of political community must evoke a conception of security that is largely consistent with the *expectations* of the role of that actor by those whom it represents. Security, for citizens of a nation-state, is therefore about *feeling* rather than *being safe*” (McDonald 2002, 289-290) As a logical result, the capacity of the nation state to make its citizens feel secure determines the legitimacy in security terms of said state, as the citizens expect policies that will improve their feeling of safety. In turn, “policymakers define security on the basis of a set of assumptions regarding vital interests, plausible enemies, and possible scenarios, all of which grow, to a not-insignificant extent, out of the specific historical and social context of a particular country and some understanding of what is ‘out there’” (Lipschutz 1998, 11). To study this kind of security, this thesis will make use of the concept of securitisation as provided by the Copenhagen School.

5.2 THE COPENHAGEN SCHOOL AND THE CONCEPT OF SECURITISATION

The Copenhagen School emerged at the Conflict and Peace Research Institute of Copenhagen. This School is known for the development of securitisation and desecuritisation theory and is mainly

represented by the writings of Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. The securitisation theory was developed in the context of research on European security dynamics as the result of debates in the late 1980s on how wide the study of security could be. One approach was the shift from the security of the state towards a broader focus on the security of the people, either as individuals or as international collective. The major problem, however, would be to decide where to stop, before everything would be rendered security. An alternative approach was made by Galtung and Øberg, based on four sets of positive goals of human need: survival, development, freedom and identity. Within this framework, security became “the combined defence policy for each need category, the totality of defence endeavours of the entire human-societal organizations” (Øberg, 1983 in Wæver 1998, 40). However, this approach faces the same problem as the first approach since the baseline is the individual level with security linked to all other goals. This makes everything a potential security issue, thereby making the concept all-inclusive and empty of content (Wæver, 1998: 40).

The answer, according to Ole Wæver, the original developer of securitisation theory, was to be found by studying the form of security speech and by seeing security as a status and modality (Wæver 1989a, 1995 in Vuori 2017, 65). Wæver argued that security in international relations is more distinctive and extreme as security in everyday language, because it has its roots in the tradition of power politics. Speaking in the traditional military-political understanding of the term:

security is survival. It is when an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a designated referent object (traditionally, but not necessarily the state, incorporating government, territory, and society). The special nature of security threats justifies the use of extraordinary means to handle them. The invocation has been the key to legitimize the use of force, but more generally, it has opened the way for the state to mobilize, or to take special powers, to handle existential threats. Traditionally, by saying “security”, a state representative declares an emergency condition, thus claiming a right to use whatever means necessary to block a threatening development. (Wæver 1988, 1995b in Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998, 21)

In other words, security is a socially constructed concept. “It has a specific meaning only within a specific social context”, as Wæver argued that “the *word* ‘security’ is the act (...) by saying it something is done. In other words: ‘Security is a speech act’” (Wæver, 1995 in Balzacq 2011, 1). This is in contrast with the realist approach to security, which focusses on the material nature of a threat (Emmers 2007, 114).

By studying the form of security speech, the main theoretical approach is the discursive approach, which places the story at the core of the analysis. According to Sayyid and Zac, “the discursive approach focusses on the way in which communities construct their limits; their relationship

to what which they are not or what threatens them, and the narrative which produce the founding past of a community, its identity, and its projections of the future” (1998: 261 in Demmers, 2017: 126). This approach aims to give an explicit and systematic description of discourses within their specific and historical and power context. (Demmers, 2017: 126) According to Lipschutz, conceptualizations of security, which will result in policy and practice, are to be found in

“discourses of security. These are neither strictly objective assessments nor analytical constructs of threat, but rather the products of historical structures and processes, of struggles for power within the state, of conflicts between the societal grouping that inhabit states and the interests that besiege them. (...) Winning the right to define security provides not just access to resources but also the *authority* to articulate new definitions of security, as well’ (Lipschutz 1998, 9, emphasis in original).

As the Copenhagen School identifies five general categories of security, the referent object to be protected varies widely beyond the state in the traditional military security. Political security can identify national sovereignty or an ideology as the referent object. Economic security identifies the national economy, societal security identifies collective identities, and species or habitats as the referent object for environmental security (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998 in Emmers 2007, 110). The traditional concept of military security is further deepened by the Copenhagen School through including non-state actors. Thus, the original problem from the eighties is back with “the risk of overstretching the definition of security with the result that everything, and therefore nothing in particular, becomes a security problem. (...) In other words, the redefinition and broadening of the concept of security need to be matched by the development of new conceptual tools” (Emmers 2007, 110). Therefore, the Copenhagen School developed the analytical framework of securitisation and desecuritisation to study security, to allow for a “systematic, comparative and coherent analysis of security” (Emmers 2007, 110).

5.3 THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This analytical framework of securitisation aims to “explicate the structures and processes that constitute security problems” based on elements from a variety of International Relation Theories such as constructivism, poststructuralism and critical theory (Balzacq 2011, 1). Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde identify that any public issue can be located on a spectrum ranging from nonpoliticised, through politicised, to securitised. While in theory any issue can be placed anywhere, in practice the place on the spectrum varies on how a specific state perceives an issue and how this the perceivence has changed over time (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998, 22).

To analyse the process of securitisation, Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde singled out three units

of analysis (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998, 36). First, the *referent objects* as things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival. Second, the *securitising actors* as actors who securitise issues by declaring something – a referent object – existentially threatened. This can be done by non-state actors, but tends to be the state and its elites as it depends on, and reveals, the power and influence needed to securitise an issue (Collins 2005 in Emmers 2007, 112). Third, *functional actors*, as actors who affect the dynamics of sector. Without being the referent object or the actor calling for security on behalf of the referent object, this is an actor who significantly influences decision in the field of security (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998, 36).

When nonpoliticised, “the state does not deal with it and it is not in any other way made an issue of public debate and decision” (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998, 23). When it does become “part of public policy, requiring government decision and resource allocations, or more rarely, some other form of cummal governance”, the issue is politicised (Ibidem). However, when “the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure”, the issue has become securitised (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998, 23-24). This portrayal of an issue, person or entities as an existential threat to a referent object is considered the *securitising move*, the first stage of the two-stage process of securitisation (Emmers 2007, 112). In this move, the securitising actor argues that an existential threat needs to have a priority of action in order to survive, “because if not handled now it will be too late, and we will not exist to remedy our failure” (Buzan, 1997 in Aradau 2004, 391). Thus, “an issue is dramatized, and presented an issue of supreme priority; thus, by labelling it as a security, an agent claims a need for and a right to treat it by extraordinary measures” (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998, 26) Securitization therefore, “is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics. Securitization can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicization” (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998, 23).

However, “the second and crucial stage of securitization is only completed successfully once the securitizing actor succeeds in convincing a relevant audience (public opinion, politicians, military officers or other elites) that a referent object is threatened. Only then can extraordinary measures be imposed” (Emmers 2007, 112). Collins has identified that governments and political elites have an advantage over other actors in this second stage. Particularly in democratic societies where the government has the legitimacy as elected representatives. Nevertheless, in democratic societies the audience still has the right to reject the speech act. In authoritarian regimes, where the military plays a central role in national politics, this can be circumvented by excluding the general population to an audience consisting of political elites and state institutions. Even though the general population may reject the speech act and consider the emergency measures illegitimate, the securitisation act itself can be seen as successful (Collins 2005 in Emmers 2007, 113).

The type of emergency measures to be implemented “will obviously depend on the circumstances and the context of the threat” (Emmers 2007, 114). However, the Copenhagen School does “not push the demand so high as to say that an emergency measure has to be adopted” for an act of securitisation to be successful (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998, 25). Thus, “a securitizing actor can make successful speech acts while still deciding to address the existential threat through standard political procedures rather than extraordinary measures” (Collins 2005, in Emmers 2007, 114).

Following this logic, Emmers argues that “a complete act of securitization really consists of and demands both discursive (speech act and shared understanding) and non-discursive (policy implementations) dimensions” (Emmers 2007, 114-115). In other words, when a securitisation move is accepted by the relevant audience, it is considered successful. When extraordinary measures are implemented as a result, the *successful securitisation* becomes a *complete securitisation*. Van der Borgh and Savenije argue that “the security measures taken not simply have a technical role; they also have important political and symbolic function (...) [and] serve different purposes at the same time. They can be a response to a perceived problem, a reply to critiques (...) and a message that showing that ‘something is done’ in a way that is appreciated by the audience” (Borgh and Savenije 2015, 7-8).

“Securitizing injects urgency into an issue and leads to a sustained mobilization of political support and deployment of resources. It also creates the kind of political momentum necessary for the adoption of additional and emergency measures. The securitization of an issue can thus provide some tangible effects (...) by calling them security-relevant. These achievements might not be obtained if the same problems were only regarded as political matters” (Emmers 2007, 115). However, since Emmers refers to both additional measures within the political sphere and emergency measures outside the normal political sphere, these measures can be combined in the term *customised policy* as given by Balzacq (Balzacq 2011, 3). Therefore, customised policy will be used in this thesis to identify both the normal and extraordinary enacted measures to protect the referent object from the existential threat.

5.4 DESECURITISATION

The reverse of securitisation is possible as well. When issues are no longer treated as an emergency, but normalised into the ordinary political processes the issue has been desecuritized (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998, 4). However, this notion is argued to be “under-theorised’, an “‘excess’ of the theory of securitization (...) in relatively a-theoretical terms”, and “far from viewed as unproblematic or consistently empirically applied” (Aradau 2004, 907-908, Hansen 2012, 526). Moreover, “there is a theoretical inferiority attached to desecuritisation in that it lacks securitisation’s grounding in popular language. One cannot desecuritize through speech acts such as ‘I hereby declare this issue to no longer

be a threat' as this would be invoking the language and logic of security." (Hansen 2012, 530) In other words, as the Copenhagen School identified speech acts as the source of securitisation, there is strictly speaking not a desecurification speech act. (Ibidem)

Hansen identifies four ideal-types of desecurification (Hansen 2012, 539-544). First, *change through stabilisation* implies "a rather slow move out of an explicit security discourse, which in turn facilitates a less militaristic, less violent and hence more genuinely political form of engagement" (Hansen 2012, 539). This form requires that parties within a conflict recognise each other as legitimate. Developed for the specific context of the Cold War, this concept "is no longer empirically relevant" and will thus not be used for this thesis (Ibidem). The second form, *replacement* "theorises desecurification as the combination of one issue moving out of security while another is simultaneously securitised" (Hansen 2012, 541). This is argued by Behnke, who claims that more powerful threats will replace the threats that "no longer exercise our minds and imagination sufficiently", as political communities need an enemy to be able to identify themselves (Behnke, 2008 in Hansen 2012, 541). The third, *rearticulation* refers to desecurification "that remove an issue from the securitised by actively offering a political solution to the threats, dangers, and grievances in question. (...) Rearticulation suggest a more direct, radical form of political engagement: there is no looming background as with *change through stabilisation through* [sic], and the issue is rearticulated rather than just replaced" (Hansen 2012, 542-543). The public sphere is fundamentally changed through rearticulation, including a move out the friend-enemy distinction. However, "as politics is dynamic, one cannot in principle ever define a conflict as inherently solved. (...) Rearticulation may thus be in need of supporting discursive practices that invoke specific understanding of past conflicts while suppressing – or addressing – the need for new securifications" (Hansen 2012, 544).

This suppressing is the final form of *silencing*, "when an issue disappears or fails to register in security discourse" (Hansen 2012, 544). McKenzie argues that the "exclusion and silencing" of women in post-conflict Sierra Leone represent the systematically neglecting of female insecurities in Africa. (MacKenzie 2009, 242) Thus, their exclusion from the status of combatant while male combatants were to be reintegrated left them from "the securitised to the non-politicised" (Hansen 2012, 544). Thus, proving that by silencing, the effects of desecurification may benefit some more than the excluded others.

5.5 OTHER SHORTCOMINGS AND CRITIQUES

There are multiple other shortcomings and critiques of the Copenhagen Model identified, which can be found along three lines. First, the model itself is criticised for being too Eurocentric. The notions of societal security are mainly deprived from a European borderless experience with political and

economic integration which is linked to a collective European identity, which is disputable in many other regions of the world. Especially if those regions are easily analysed through the traditional military security lens as realist would, such as Northeast Asia continues to be (Emmers 2007, 116).

Second, the Copenhagen School has so far primarily concentrated on framing a theoretical approach to security studies while paying insufficient attention to empirical research (Emmers 2007, 116, McDonald 2008, 564). Empirical studies are needed to explain why some issues are perceived as an existential threat and others not, and why securitising moves succeed while others are rejected. Therefore, empirical studies might lead to a better understand of these processes.

The third and main category of critique are weaknesses within the framework itself. According to McDonald, “a range of issues or dynamics are mentioned but underspecified in the securitization framework, most prominently in the speech act” (McDonald 2008, 564). “As it stands, the model may not be able to sufficiently dissociate an act of securitization from a case of severe politicization. The distinction that may exist between these processes can be blurred depending on the political context and existing circumstances. (...) Despite the use of speech acts, solutions for the resolution of non-military challenges are frequently are frequently found in the realm of politics” (Emmers 2007, 117).

Furthermore, the Copenhagen School neglects the assessing of “the policy effectiveness of extraordinary measures [or] to the unintended consequences that they might provoke” (Emmers 2007, 116).

Above all, the speech act was deemed “too thin and too formal to capture the concrete dynamics, strategies, and forms that securitizing acts can take” (Williams 2011, 212). Instead of focussing exclusively on speech, the pragmatic approach stresses the variety of verbal and non-verbal ways through which securitisation can take place. (Ibidem) Thus, not only language, but repertoires of gestures and images as well. Key securitising actors in this regard are artists and the media (McDonald 2008, 569). Furthermore, due to the diverse audiences addressed by these forms, or those affected by it, the content of speech acts must be seen in the broader context in which they were produced and have their potential effectiveness (Williams 2011, 212). Thus, the theory leaves this dimension “radically underdeveloped, with a resulting inability to see the different forms the securitizing acts take depending on the context and audience” (Williams 2011, 213). Context is needed because the audience is not a passive factor. The rhetoric used to convince the nature of a threat may convince one particular audience, but may fail to resonate with another (Williams 2011, 213) Thus, context matters, as does the ‘fluidity of security, the extent to which security is constantly reconstituted through the changing interests and identities of actors, and the changing context in which they find themselves’ (McDonald 2002, 286). In other words, interests, identities and perceptions are not set in stone.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Considering these shortcomings and critiques, the theoretical framework of the Copenhagen School will be more contextualised to put in historical perspective. However, as the distinction between nonpoliticised, politicised and securitised forms the foundation to differentiate the processes within this thesis, the Copenhagen School remains the framework used for this thesis. Acknowledging the demand for a broader approach than merely speech act, this thesis will nevertheless mainly draw from official statements, speeches and documents. As will be made clear in this thesis, the role of the media will be acknowledged as contributing to certain perceptions, as one extreme act of violence may generalise one's perception. Acknowledging the blurry distinction between severe politicisation and securitisation, within this thesis it will be argued that this case study is more than merely severe politicisation.

6 THE BROADER CONTEXT

To apprehend the processes of securitization in this thesis, the historical context of South Africa is an important factor. The context will consist of four elements. First, a short summary of the Apartheid from 1948 to 1975 and the militarisation of South African society from 1976 will be summarised. Next, the emphasis will be laid on developments in the rural border areas of South Africa, where farmers were part of the governmental security systems. This in turn made them a target of political violence. Finally, the political transition after Apartheid will be discussed along with the security sector reform.

6.1 SOUTH AFRICA UNDER APARTHEID

Apartheid – the Afrikaner word for apartness or separateness – refers to “the system of racial discrimination and white political domination adopted by the National Party while it was in power from 1948 to 1994” (Beck 2013, 135). Using this system of legislation, everyone in South Africa was classified either as white, black, coloured or Asian. As the legislation expanded over time, whites would, as the only “civilised” race the architects of this system, exercise absolute political power over the other three (Beck 2013, 136). With the classification came segregation and the nullifying of existing property rights. “Black areas that had been inhabited for decades and even centuries were now zoned for whites only (...) [, forcing] millions of blacks from their homes” resulting in an increase in poverty and crime in newly formed townships outside the cities (Beck 2013, 137-138). Eventually, virtually all aspects of public life were segregated with the infamous “whites only” signs.

Protests against these acts were declared a criminal act, aided by the anti-communistic stance of the government declaring all opposition outlawed communists. With broad emergency powers, any protest against the laws were considered crimes as the government eventually acquired “the right to detain indefinitely for interrogation any person thought to be a ‘terrorist’ or who might have knowledge of ‘terrorists’” (Beck 2013, 140). Nevertheless, protest developed. The black African National Congress (ANC) called upon a Program of Action in 1949 with new methods of resistance, such as strikes, boycotts and civil disobedience as Nelson Mandela was elected as one of three Youth League members to the ANC National Executive. The ANC formed the multiracial Congress Alliance with other organisations, who proclaimed the Freedom Charter on 26 June 1955, which stated that ‘South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people.’ (Beck 2013, 140) The government responded by labelling the Freedom Charter a communist manifest, intended to overthrow the state, and arrested some of its leaders for treason, including Mandela who was eventually acquitted.

Nevertheless, the strategy of nonviolence seemed to have little effect on the government.

Believing that White, Indian and Coloured organisations weakened the African opposition, Robert Sobuwoke, together with other sympathisers, split off from the ANC to form the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC). The ANC planned a massive non-violent protest in March 1960 against the pass laws and for a minimum wage, but was pre-empted by the PAC with a demonstration in the Johannesburg township of Sharpeville, where the security forces killed sixty-nine protestors and wounded 180. “Sharpeville became a rallying cry for anti-apartheid movements” with strikes and created international outrage with foreign governments condemning these attacks. (Beck 2013, 142) As response, the government declared the ANC and the PAC illegal organisations and declared a state of emergency. Driven underground, the ANC founded the underground guerrilla army Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) after fifty years of non-violence amounted to nothing, as the PAC founded the Azanian People’s Liberation Army (APLA) as their armed wing. Mandela was arrested again in 1962, and sentenced for incitement and illegally leaving the country. However, when the following year MK’s high command was arrested, he was sentenced to life imprisonment and send to Robben Island. “The government had effectively crushed the anti-apartheid movement with its brutal laws, harsh sentences, and increasing use of torture and intimidation” (Beck, 2013: 146). However, Black resistance found another way through the Black Consciousness movement under student Steve Biko, with the emphasis on race rather than class as the central idea of the liberation struggle, primarily under other students.

6.2 THE MILITARISATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

The next decade saw significant political changes in Southern Africa, when the Portuguese pulled out of their African colonies in 1975. Mozambique came under a Marxist government, while South Africa supported forces in Angola fighting the Soviet-backed Marxists in a civil war, but were beaten back to South West Africa that was still a protectorate under South Africa since 1920.² Another civil war was raging in Rhodesia between the white minority and black majority, resulting in the independent state of Zimbabwe in 1980. As a result, South Africa had to increase its defence spending and border security. According to Beck, these changes, along with worker’s strikes, Black Consciousness and the frustration in townships created “a powder keg awaited a fuse” (Beck 2013, 160).

That fuse came on 16 June 1976, when fifteen thousand Bantu schoolchildren protested the new instruction that they were to be taught in Afrikaans. When teargas could not disperse the protest, the police fired upon the crowd killing at least two children. This prompted violent protests throughout the country, with an official figure of 575 deaths by the year’s end, mostly children. Blaming the Black Consciousness movement, the government arrested Biko in August 1977 under the Terrorist Acts. After

² After its independence in 1990, South West Africa became Namibia.

twenty days of captivity and interrogations, he was found dead. This time, the international community responded with economic sanctions, the United Nations' weapon embargo, while the United States expected South Africa to respect majority rule and universal suffrage. According to historian Beck, "the Soweto riots drove thousands of schoolchildren into guerrilla camps abroad, where they received sophisticated military training and advanced weapons" (Beck 2013, 172). As guerrilla fighters training in neighbouring countries, they could infiltrate the South African border over thousands of miles of difficult terrain, making it hard for the government to stop them from acting out guerrilla attacks. To counter these developments, the government adopted a "total strategy" to win the "trust and faith" of the black population with social and economic reform while repressing the apartheid's opponents home and abroad. (Ibidem) To this goal, the government spent one billion dollars annually on defence by 1975, equalling nearly twenty per cent of the national budget. (Beck, 2013: 140) Furthermore, a compulsory full time military service of two years for all young white men was enabled in 1977.

Violence erupted once more in the 1980's, but not in the mass protests led from above that could be defeated by the security apparatus of the Apartheid state. "Now the revolt came from below, much of it spontaneous and unplanned, as the masses simply refused to bow before White dominance again (...) [and became] openly defiant" (Beck, 170). Their violence turned to other Africans as well, as every man or woman who was suspected of collaborating with the apartheid government became the target of the black youths who controlled many townships, to make the townships ungovernable. "The black insurrection in the townships was many times more effective in forcing change than were the ANC's limited guerrilla activities", crippled by the government's border protection and the raiding and destroying of training camps in neighbouring countries. (Beck 2013, 184) Although order in the townships was gradually restored, the government itself was losing support, both within the country and from the international community with severe economic sanctions, and had to face changes. The ANC had to change as well, as the popular insurrection to overthrow the government proved to be fruitless, while they remained dependant on the slowly collapsing Soviet Union. Thus, "most ANC members now favored negotiations and the establishment of a multiparty democracy and capitalist economy" (Beck 2013, 189).

6.3 DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RURAL AREAS IN THE 1980'S

Isolated from the urban environment and relatively wealthy, the commercial farmers in South Africa were largely spared from the violence. (Human Rights Watch 2001, 139) Nevertheless, farmers and their workers had an important role to play in the struggle, either on the side of the government, on the side of the armed wings against the government, or merely as neutral bystanders and victims. The

emphasis lies on the border areas with Zimbabwe and Mozambique, where white farmers were mobilised into the state security systems against enemy incursions as part of the total strategy, and as a result became targets of these same armed wings.

6.3.1 The commando system

Farmers in rural areas were organised in so-called commando cells, a system that gained reputation during the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) when the men, mainly white farmers, of the independent Boer Republics organised themselves in local militias to fight the British. After the incorporation into the British Empire, the commandos were disbanded but many reorganised themselves in shooting clubs. In 1912, they were incorporated into the Union Defence Force to defend the new established dominion of the Union of South Africa. (Twala and Oelofse 2013, 25-26) When the South African Defence Force (SADF) was formed in the 1960's, their reservists, the Territorial Reserve Force System, were primarily responsible for rear area defence tasks during wartime. This ranged from protecting military communication and supply lines to guarding strategic civilian infrastructure. Their secondary function was to assist state departments in times of peace. Due to the conscription system, the state could draw upon every white male under the age of 55 and every resident of the countryside. In the mid- and late-1970's the role of the commandos shifted due to the political and military situation as described above. Increasingly, the secondary role of the commandos shifted towards an auxiliary role under the South African Police (SAP) to contain domestic political resistance. Emphasis was also increased on the capacity to gather local information as the eyes and ears on the ground. (J. Steinberg 2005a)

According to Maj-Gen (ret) De Vries, many of the farmers and their workers were dedicated members of the Area Force Units which "formed the main fabric for this [Angolan] counter insurgency war. (...) Each farmstead was prepared as a 'mini defended locality' for farmers and their families to hold out during an attack until reaction forces reached them. (...) They knew the habits of the enemy (...) and the terrain" (De Vries 2013). With the knowledge of their local area, and the communication capacity to not only contact other farmers, but the SADF as well, these commandos proved to be an excellent early warning system when enemy insurgents crossed the borders in to the rural border areas. Thus, the commando system was used against internal and external threats, militarising the civilian life of white rural communities. "White civilians", according to Steinberg, "were to be mobilised into what was understood as protracted warfare against both communism and black revolt (...), [blurring] the line between ideological mobilisation on the one hand, and genuine defence strategies on the other hand" (J. Steinberg 2005a, 5).

6.3.2 The targeting of white farmers

A blurring on the other side of the spectrum occurred as well, between legitimate targets and innocent civilians. When interviewed in 2011, the secretary general of the MK Military Veterans Association Ayanda Dlodlo offered an insight what made one a legitimate target during the armed struggle. He claimed that not all who supported apartheid were considered enemies in a military sense. So was a white farmer not considered an enemy as long as he did not act as an extension of the South African Defence Force as a member of the commandos.³ However, as a commando, he was an enemy combatant in “the war against a system that is a crime against humanity” alongside other black and white members of the SADF and the South African Police (SAP) (Politicsweb 2011b). How blurred this line could become can be illustrated by the MK’s landmine campaign in the Northern border areas between 1985 and 1987. One of the more notable examples of the ANC claiming responsibility for the deaths of white farmers was two white women and four white children were killed by a landmine. In a Radio Freedom broadcast on 6 January 1986, the ANC described the victims as “six white Boer farmers” (Politicsweb 2011a).⁴

Later that year, Radio Freedom boasted that the landmine campaign exposed the government’s inability to protect its “arch-supporters”, because the “racist farmers” in the Northern border areas were “fully integrated” in the government’s security networks. “White men, women and youths are part and parcel of the military and paramilitary units (...), part of the local police force [and] they participate enthusiastically in the (...) area defence system. (...) Clearly, the enemy has also long regarded these areas as war zones” (Politicsweb 2011a). Therefore, all white men, women and children in these areas were considered an enemy on racial and ideological grounds. Black workers, who fell victim due to the indiscriminating nature of landmines, were told by the broadcast that they were not the target, and were advised to avoid all roads used by farmers. Furthermore, they were told to resist, sabotage and turn on their farmers with the prospect of the land redistribution. “The white farmer community [of] exploiters with a slave owner-mentality (...) monopolise the land claiming (...) exclusive rights to all our fertile lands. (...) Let us all unite and fight for a new South Africa where the land shall not be the property of white farmers only but shall be shared among all. Let us make the countryside (...) a hell for the enemy” (Politicsweb 2011a). In other words, the struggle against the racist farmers was not only for members of the armed wings, but also for all black people living in the Northern Areas.

As part of this struggle against apartheid, the year 1990 was designated by the PAC, and its military wing, APLA, as the “Year of the People’s offensive”. They launched their “One Settler One Bullet campaign”, meaning that one bullet sufficed to kill so other bullets were spared for other targets.

³ The SADF became the post-apartheid SANDF.

⁴ Radio Freedom was the ANC radio propaganda station operating from different nations in Africa.

In this year, PAC leader and APLA commander Sabelo Phama ordered “Operation Great Storm”, a joint venture of PAC and a special APLA task force to “reclaim the land from the white farmers and return it to the African people” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 1998, 379). Aim of this operation was to conduct armed robberies “to raise funds and/or obtain weapons and vehicles to enable APLA to carry out its military strategy” by so-called repossession units. During this operation, weapons and vehicles were stolen in a number of farms with multiple farmers murdered.

One of these farmers was Roelof Fourie when he was ambushed and killed by four men when he opened the gate to his farm on 19 February 1992. The perpetrators stole two fire arms, money, clothing and other items and Mr. Fourie’s motorcar which was used to escape. Four men were arrested and prosecuted for murder and robbery with aggravating circumstances. The shooter, Hendrik Leeuw, grew up on the farm but claimed his APLA commander had given instruction that farmers should be attacked and murdered. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 1998, 379) Leeuw’s accomplice, Sebolai Nkgwedi, grew also up on the farm and claimed that Fourie had been selected as a target because he had weapons which could be used in the struggle against apartheid. He further claimed that it was policy of the PAC, as part of “Operation Great Storm”, to attack farmers who were illegally occupying the land. This was later confirmed when an APLA ex-commander, Mr. Oupa Kgotle, testified on their behalf that the APLA commander had given instructions to attack farmers because they served in the Army and the Police and contributed to the economy. (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 74)

In 1993, APLA was attributed to have 2700 members outside of the country, with 120 trained members operating inside the borders. The armed wing was responsible for thirty-four attacks nationally which claimed the lives of thirty-four lives and injuring many more. Thirteen of these attacks were on farm houses. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 1998, 381)

6.4 THE END OF APARTHEID

When in September 1989 President De Klerk took office, this change seemed to be taking place by releasing political prisoners. On 2 February 1990, De Klerk announced the release of Mandela, the unbanning of the ANC, PAC and other liberation movements and his intent to develop a new constitution based on universal suffrage. After negotiations with the government, the now elected ANC-president Mandela announced the immediate ending of the armed struggle by the MK in August. On 1 February 1991, De Klerk announced all remaining apartheid laws to be repealed, lifting most economic sanctions. After periods of negotiation, 27 April 1994 was fixed as the day when “new national and provincial governments would be elected to institute a non-racial, non-sexist, unified, and democratic South Africa based on the principle of one person, one vote”, resulting in the Nobel Peace Prize for De Klerk and Mandela. (Beck 2013, 197-198) Despite violence incidents in the days preceding

the elections, including from the ultra-right white Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging (AWB), nearly twenty million people casted their votes, resulting in the ANC winning close to sixty-three percent of the vote. On May 10, 1994, four years after leaving Robben Island, Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as President of South Africa.

With the transition of power the ANC took control of the security apparatus. The government created the South African Police Service (SAPS) out of the eleven police forces that existed under the Apartheid who were regarded as racist, oppressive, and illegitimate by large sectors of the population (Gastrow and Shaw 2001, 262). As crime continued to rise the private security industry became one of the fastest-growing economic sectors with an estimated turnover exceeding R 10 billion per year, almost matching the national police budget. (Gastrow and Shaw 2001, 269) Another issue was the former SADF. These statutory forces, along with the former homeland forces, would be integrated into the new established SANDF with non-statutory forces like their former enemies as the MK and the APLA “as a powerful illustration of the government’s commitment to national reconciliation, unity and transformation” (Ministry of Defence 1996, 26). The compulsory military service, a remnant of the former military structure, had already been suspended since 1 January of that year, but was abolished by the new ANC government. This had its effect on the commando system. “Many left because they had always resented compulsory military service, others because they objected politically to serving in the military of an ANC-led government” (J. Steinberg 2005a, 6). According to Steinberg, the attitude from the ANC towards the functionality of the old commando structure was not very positive as well. The auxiliary role the commandos played during the last decades was a “paramilitary one in which black South African residents were treated, not as citizens requiring a safety service, but as inhabitants of a terrain occupied by an enemy, and as a potentially rebellious population to be quelled” (J. Steinberg 2005a, 6) .

Therefore, as the outline 1996 White Paper on Defence stated, “the history of South Africa (...) suggests that it is inappropriate to utilise armed forces in a policing role on a (...) [semi-]permanent basis” (Ministry of Defence 1996, 23).⁵ Even though the widespread basis on which the SANDF supports the SAPS in policing roles was likely to persist due to the ongoing public violence and the relative shortage of police personnel, the government had set the policy goal of building up the SAPS’ capacity to be self-sufficient in order to limit the SANDF’s internal policing roles. “The SANDF would then only be deployed in the most exceptional circumstances, such as complete breakdown of public order beyond the capacity of the SAPS, or a state of national defence” (Ministry of Defence 1996, 23)” Thus although deemed inappropriate, the commandos continued to play a role after 1996, especially in the

⁵ The 1996 White Paper on Defence for the Republic of South Africa was the official defence policy for the post-Apartheid government.

rural areas where they continued to serve in their auxiliary to the SAPS. Together, they were the governments provision of security for the 60.938 predominantly white owned commercial farms in the nine provinces of South Africa according to the 1996 census.⁶ Together these commercial farms employed 914.473 regular employees, of which nearly a third consisted of casual and seasonal workers. Seventy-five percent of the farm workers were black and twenty-one percent coloured, while whites and Indians only contributed to three percent and less than a half percent. (Statistics South Africa 1996, iii-iv)

6.5 CONCLUSION

For almost fifty years, the system of Apartheid segregated many aspects of public life, while any form of protest against this set of legislations was suppressed by increasing safety measures. Millions of black Africans were forced of their land into designated homelands and townships. After a non-violent protest became a massacre in 1960, the ANC and PAC formed armed wings to fight Apartheid since non-violent protests amounted to nothing. With the decolonisation of Southern Africa, the militarisation of South Africa increased as the frustration under Apartheid grew. A nationwide period of violence ensued after security forces fired upon demonstrating schoolchildren in 1976, resulting in further militarisation. The 1980s marked a less organised period, when black Africans protested non-violently en masse. The rural areas saw an increasing militarisation of farmers as many served in the commando system to safeguard their community against violence and their country from guerrilla infiltrators. These farmers were in turn attacked and murdered by the armed wings with political motivations. After the ANC rose to power in 1994, the security sector was reformed to reconcile former enemies with each other and plans for the demilitarisation of rural policing were drawn.

⁶ Excluding the farming units in the former homelands and the self-governing territories.

7 THE INITIAL SECURITISATION, 1997-1998

This chapter will focus on the question of how the process of securitisation initially unfolded. It will encompass the period from February 1997 to October 1998. It starts when attention to the issue of farm attacks was raised by the South African Agricultural Union (SAAU) by requesting more state attention to this phenomenon, and will end with the government's Rural Safety Summit where president Mandela declared attacks and murders on farms and smallholdings a national challenge demanding urgent attention.

7.1 THE POLITICIZATION OF FARM ATTACKS

On 4 February 1997, a meeting was held by the National Operational Committee (NOCOC), which coordinates the activities of the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). During this meeting, the representatives of the SAAU expressed their concerns regarding the increasing frequency and brutality of attacks on the farmers they represented.⁷ The organised agriculture could rely on support from the white commercial farmer communities, to pressure the government into taking responsibility for the safety and security of farmers. According to their own statistics, the SAAU claimed a rise from 327 attacks with 66 murders in 1991, to 551 attacks with 121 murders in 1996 (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 19). Based on these statistics, the representatives expressed their concern that existing security structures were not functioning to their satisfaction. More specifically, the argument was that the follow-up actions by the security forces after farm attacks were uncoordinated, hindering the arrests of suspects (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 2). According to the organized agriculture, the criminal justice system was ineffective when 'perpetrators of farm attacks were, literally, getting away with murder' (ISS 2003, 8). Furthermore, the perception existed that attacks on white commercial farmers were politically and racially motivated "to drive white people off the farms in order to make land available for redistribution" (ISS 2003, 8). By characterising the attacks in such a way, "the agricultural unions contributed to the popular perception that farm attacks were a continuation of the armed struggle against the apartheid state waged by Umkhonto weSizwe (MK) and APLA" (ISS 2003, 8).

Thus, by raising this issue at the NOCOC meeting, the representatives forced the governments security structures to debate this issue. In other words, this specific issue moved from nonpoliticised to politicised on the securitisation spectrum. Following this model of securitisation, the government had

⁷ SAAU is today called Agri South Africa (Agri SA)

to make decisions and allocate resources in order to deal with this issue. Several steps were taken to deal with this phenomenon.

First, the Joint Security Staff, with representatives of the SANDF and the SAPS, identified farm attacks as a specific crime tendency requiring special operational attention. As a result, the Crime and Information Analysis Centre (CIAC) of the SAPS started collecting data based on the incidence reports that police at station level compiled after each farm attack. These reports could give “particulars of the type of attack, name of the farm or plot, nearest town, time and date, investigating officer, particulars of victims and suspects, description of the incident, weapons used, items robbed, suspected involvement of farm workers, the presence of farm shops or stalls, arrests made, any apparent motive, security forces involved, etc.” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 15). When combined, these reports could indicate the extent of the phenomenon.

Next, a working group was formed with representatives of the SAPS, the SANDF, and the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) under the supervision of the National Intelligence Coordinating Commission (NICOC) with the vision to gather and analyse available information on farm attacks. Lastly, a task team was appointed to speak with stakeholders in combatting this phenomenon in all provinces, ranging from organized agriculture, farmers, and workers to security forces and business people. This led to the drafting of a Rural Protection Plan (RPP), which was announced by President Mandela to be implemented on 1 December 1997. The objective of the RPP was “to encourage all [role-players] concerned with rural safety to work together in a co-ordinated manner, and engage in joint planning, action and monitoring to combat crime in the country’s rural areas” (Schönteich and Steinberg 2000, 19).

These role-players who protected the rural communities varied from area to area. Many different factors were at play, such as socioeconomic and geographic differences, that largely dictated what security system was put in place. For example, border areas had traditionally been more militarised in comparison to other areas. According to Manby, farmers in wealthier areas, such as sugar cane coastal belt of KwaZulu-Natal, relied mostly on private security. However, farmers in arid remote areas with substantial farms could not afford these security measures, resulting in them using the commando system instead. Nonetheless, in areas where farm owners had less control over the commando units farm owners relied more on private farm watch initiatives (Manby 2002, 91-92). Under the RPP, police were supposed to regularly visit the commercial farms. However, understaffing and a lack of vehicles in most rural areas undermined the effectiveness. In practice, farmers with farmhouses near one another would join forces in security cells called farm watches, either of their own accord or under the RPP regulations. Linked to each other by radio, they had close ties to the commando structure in some areas. These private initiatives in combination with the RPP made for an

effective system, with a significantly higher arrest rate in cases of violent crime against farm owners or managers in comparison with South Africa in general. Forty percent of all reported farm attacks during the first six months of 1998 led to an arrest by July. On remote farms, the estimated arrest rate was up to ninety percent. However, the government response time is still seen as inadequate to the distances of the police stations to the farms. "Key to the high arrest rate in many cases is the rapid response time of the farmwatch and commando system rather than police action" (Manby 2002, 94).

In December 1997, the first report of the NICOC, *Attacks on members of the farming community*, was presented. This report provided the first definition of farm attacks, defined by NICOC:

attacks on farms and smallholdings as referring to acts aimed against the person of residents on such premises, whether with the intent to murder, rape, rob, steal or inflict bodily harm. In addition to the aforementioned, all actions aimed at harming farming activities as a commercial concern, whether for motives related to ideology, labour relations, land issues, revenge, grievances or racist concerns, for example, malicious damage to property, arson or intimidation also received attention (NICOC, 1997 in Committee of Inquiry 2003, 220).

In the first nine months of 1997 covered by the report, 290 attacks were reported with 61 identified murders, although the report cited problems with the provision of information on crime by the SAPS, stressing the unreliability of the statistics. They identified that robbery was the common theme in attacks, while in some cases revenge played a role. However, in some of the attacks analysed, the farmer had been killed while nothing had been taken. Some of the attacks seemed to be executed with "military precision" by small groups of perpetrators, originating from outside the area of the attack, allegedly even from great distances away. (Ibidem) The report confirms that there is a perception among farmers that there is a campaign to drive them off their land which they link the pre-1994 anti-farmer rhetoric by liberation movements. Despite the absence of a direct correlation of political groups with attacks, "there was a possibility that 'dissident' APLA/MK operatives might be implicated in attacks" (NICOC, 1997 in Committee of Inquiry 2003, 235). However, the report "also refers to alternative viewpoints that 'certain elements' within the agricultural sector and right-wing groupings were using the attacks as a way of whipping up emotions for their own political agenda, possibly with a view to discrediting the government, and justifying taking the law into their own hand" (Ibidem).

A second, more refined definition of farm attacks was given by the CIAC in 1998 in their second report on attacks on farms and smallholding. This report covered the first six months of that year in which 510 people fell victim in 357 attacks, resulting in sixty-six deaths. Criticism was uttered in this report that there was no police crime code for attacks on farms and smallholdings. As a result, such attacks were recorded by the category of crime committed such as robbery or rape. Furthermore, the crimes

report did not specify the occupation of the victim, differentiate farms from smallholdings, or include crimes on the farming community outside of their farms or smallholdings. Due to the need to further specify the occupation of the victims, the definition categorised victims as residents, workers or visitors. The new definition as given by the CIAC's was:

Acts aimed against persons or residents, of workers at and/or visitors to farms and smallholdings, whether with the intent to murder, rape, rob or inflict bodily harm (cases relating to domestic violence, drunkenness or resulting from commonplace social interaction between people – where victims and offenders are often known to one another – are excluded). Moreover, all actions aimed at disrupting farming activities as a commercial concern, whether for motives related to ideology, labour disputes, land issues, revenge, grievances or racist concerns like, for example, intimidation (Strauss, 1998 in Schönteich and Steinberg 2000, 27).

When broken down in categories, forty-six percent of the victims involved owned the property on which they were attacked, twenty-three percent were workers, four percent were managers and nineteen percent were direct family of people within these categories. The remaining eight percent were visitors. Of these victims, sixty-nine percent of the victims were white, while twenty-three percent were black, while among the murdered victims seventy-four percent were white and seventeen percent were black. The report found robbery the most common crime committed, particularly the theft of cash, electronics, firearms and vehicles. According to the investigating officers, the motive for financial or economic gain was dominant in the attacks as it accounted for eighty-three percent of attacks. Furthermore, the report found that “residents of farms and smallholdings are perceived to be soft targets”, with economic reasons as the financial status of the farmer, the existence of shops or stalls on the premises, or information on cash on a specific farm in the top reasons as indicated by investigating officers (Strauss, 1998 in Schönteich and Steinberg 2000, 31-32).

7.2 THE SECURITISATION OF FARM ATTACKS

Despite the RPP, white farmers continued to feel unsafe. Recommendations on how to handle trespassers, “shoot first and shoot last”, were given by the president of the Free State Agricultural Union Pieter Gous (Independent 1997). He also warned the government that farmers would deliver their own rough justice and form rural vigilante groups if the government failed to control the violence. He gave this reaction after the death of Theo Pieterse, 50, near Bultfontein, which was the third murder within ten days in the Free State in October 1997. Mr Pieterse's neighbours tracked down three male suspects who had been around that day looking for work according to Mr Pieterse's workers. When

the three suspects were found hiding in a nearby water canal, one suspect died and two others were seriously injured during the 'citizen arrest'. Although Gous regretted the death of the suspect, which would be investigated by the police as murder, he claimed that it reflected the high levels of frustration in the farming community. The leader of the Transvaal Agricultural Union, Dries Brouwer, said that "attacks on farmers had reached 'paramilitary proportion'" (Independent 1997). This perception had been confirmed by the attackers themselves in some cases. In March 1998, a mixed-race woman who tried to protect her white husband on their farm outside Pretoria was told by his attackers that they killed only whites, not coloureds. In May 1998, the farmer Donald de la Field, 60, was recovering from a hip replacement operation when he was attacked, tortured and killed in his wheelchair by having his throat slit. The intruders then waited for his 52-year old wife to get home, who was raped before she was killed. They left a note behind saying "kill the Boer" stealing only a revolver from the house. "In other incidents, the attackers reportedly claimed they were members of Umkhonto weSizwe" (New York Times 1998).

The perception of insecurity was further confirmed by the announcement of the official figures from the SAPS, which saw a sharp rise from 433 farm attacks in 1997 to 767 in 1998. To address the growing concerns of the agricultural communities, President Mandela hosted a Rural Safety Summit on 10 October 1998. The aim was to achieve "consensus around a future process to deal with the issue of attacks against farms and smallholdings, as well as more general issues of rural insecurity (...) [,] strengthening existing strategies to deal with rural crime, as well as the development of further action plans" (Schönteich and Steinberg 2000, 23).

In his closing address to the Summit, President Mandela said:

This summit represents what has become a defining tradition of our new democracy, to strive for national consensus and unity in facing national challenges.

(...) This is first and foremost a summit for action against crime, in particular the killings and violence against members of the farming community. The government deplores the cold blooded killings that have been taking place on the farms in the past few years. While killings on farms, like crime in general, have been a feature of South African life for many decades, *the incidents of murder and assault in farming areas have increased dramatically in recent years.*

(...) Beyond the immediate human suffering, lack of security and stability in our rural and farming community causes *serious disruption to our economy*. It threatens to bring reduced growth or production, loss of wages and profits and in time unemployment. *It brings the spectre of deepening poverty, and potential social instability and upheaval.* For all these

reasons, we must stop these killings at once. And we must act together in doing so, for there is no other way to succeed.

(...) The situation in the rural and farming areas *demands our urgent attention and action*. (...) I am therefore giving instructions to the Minister of Defence to immediately investigate mechanisms to ensure maximum participation in the commando system not only by members of the farmers organisations, but also farm workers and dwellers as well as the community in general.

(...) There is a body of evidence which indicates that some of the killings do arise from feelings of revenge, growing out of exploitative employment conditions or racial discrimination and attacks. Human rights violation and random assaults unfortunately happen on too many of our farms. (...) But let me assure you, nevertheless, that *there is no political campaign to drive white people, and in particular Afrikaners, off the land*.

(...) The solution to the problem of farm killings must emerge from all of us. I am convinced that any political differences notwithstanding, this is one issue on which we can speak with one voice. I am of the view that even if at times the chorus may have been discordant, we are singing the same song (Mandela Archives 1998, emphasis by author).

In the final declaration of the summit, “the spates of senseless killings and other forms of criminal activity affecting farming and rural communities” were unconditionally condemned by the representatives of “all sectors of the farming and rural community, and government and business” (Schönteich and Steinberg 2000, 23). The participants of the summit recognised that the crime problem in rural areas had complex and multifaceted causes that could not be solved by a security approach alone. It would require extensive research into the possible motives and causes, to develop preventative strategies. Information was to be collected and analysed to help prevent and combat these attacks, as well as to disprove perceptions of the causes, which would require academic research. To curb the attacks, the RPP should be utilised as the operation strategy. It needed to be more inclusive of all people in the farming and rural community by expanding the commandos and police reservists, as well as incorporating all legitimate private sector initiatives in rural areas. To further enhance rural safety, all relevant role-players had to co-operate and mobilise resources for the identified shortcomings. The government was to continue to improve the criminal justice system, as well as give clarity to legal issues considering the rights of (potential) victims in the rural community. However, in the long term, all role-players should work together with the department for safety and security to develop a long term-policy framework for rural safety and security to ensure safer rural communities. Finally, the spiritual leaders of the nation were called upon to unite in “humility and prayer to revive

the moral values and standards which will again condemn lawlessness of all kind, create social pressure against criminality and reward decency” (Schönteich and Steinberg 2000, 24-25).

Thus, the government embodied by President Mandela acknowledged the dramatic rise of murders in rural areas as a matter of national security, as it caused serious disruption within the national economy. When not properly addressed, this issue may have had severe consequences for the social stability of the country as a whole. Therefore, the urgent attention and action of the government was needed to prevent these attacks and murders from taking place, before it was too late. While President Mandela reassured the white public that the claim of a political campaign to drive white farmers off the land was not true, he included all South Africans in contributing to the solution. To recall Van der Borgh and Savenije, security measures have important political and symbolic functions. (Borgh and Savenije 2015, 9) It can be argued that it was for the utmost importance for President Mandela, as the founder and commander of the disbanded MK, to condemn these attacks and to prove to the audience of representatives that the political strategy of targeting farmers was a thing of the past. This was an opportunity to prove the legitimacy of the new inclusive South Africa government by securing the people once perceived to be the ‘arch-supporters’ of the apartheid state. As well as the legitimacy for the new SAPS and SADF to prove that the integrated MK and APLA forces would protect all citizens.⁸

As a result, a customised policy was developed to combat the phenomenon with two important elements. First, farm attacks became a so-called priority crime. Priority crimes, such as violence related to gangs and taxis, violence in the political sphere, and bank and cash-in-transit robberies, are crimes that are of national priority and deserve more attention and resources. As a result, priority committees on rural safety were added to the NOCOC Mechanism structure, from national level down to ground level.⁹ The priority committees would co-ordinate the operational activities of all relevant role-players on all levels. This ranged from the SAPS, the SANDF, provincial and local government, organised agriculture, to “any other person, group or organisation, which can play an active role in, or support the rural protection plan” (Schönteich and Steinberg 2000, 19-20). As a priority crime, the NOCOC started to keep statistics on farm attacks for operational purposes. Statistics on all priority crimes were submitted by the SAPS at station level and from SANDF commandos.

Second, these SANDF commandos were to be expanded as new budget allowed the Territorial Reserve to recruit actively in black townships of rural South Africa for new area-bound reaction force

⁸ See previous chapter.

⁹ There are four levels of Operational Co-ordinating Committees in an hierarchical structure: The national (NOCOC), headed by the SAPS deputy national commissioner and SANDF chief of joint operations; the provincial (POCOCs) headed by SAPS commissioners and SANDF general officers commanding of regional task forces; area operational (AOCOCs) headed by SAPS area commissioners and SANDF army group commanders; and lastly the ground level (GOCOCs), headed by SAPS station commissioners and SANDF commando commanders. (Schönteich and Steinberg 2000, 21)

commando members, providing part-time work for the vast majority of unemployed recruits. Thus, the institution that once mobilised hundreds of thousands of white South Africans for compulsory military draft to maintain public order changed into the “*de facto* employment provider and skills developer in rural towns across the country” as black membership grew exponentially (J. Steinberg 2005a, 9).

Third, the summit resulted in the forming of a rural safety task team, with three distinct working groups. The first group was responsible for the communication to the public while ensuring that all parties involved refrained from inflammatory statements, as well as initiating and collecting research, information and statistics relating to attacks on farms and smallholdings. The second work group had the responsibility of implementing the improvements to the RPP suggested during the summit, as well as coordinating specific operations to combat farm attacks. The third group focussed on the development of a longer-term policy for rural safety.

7.3 CONCLUSION

With this chapter, the initial process of securitisation has been explained. In February 1997, representatives of the SAAU attended a meeting of the NOCOC. Based on their own statistics which saw a rise in the attacks and murders in the farming community, they expressed their concern that the existing security structures were not functioning adequately. Furthermore, they believed that the attacks on white commercial farmers were racially and politically motivated as a continuation of the armed struggle that officially ended merely seven years before. Several steps were taken by the government to counter this issue, thus politicising it. It acquired special operational attention by the SAPS, a working group was established under the NICOC, and most importantly, the RPP was developed to co-ordinate the crime combatting activities in the rural areas. Farm attacks received an official definition, and the first official investigations on the nature and motives of these crimes started. Despite all these efforts, the number of farm attacks and murders kept rising, resulting in the Rural Safety Summit where the politicised issue of farm attacks were securitised due to its existential threat to the national economy and the potential threat of social instability. Furthermore, the political and symbolic function of these measures were a test of the legitimacy for the new South Africa. A customised policy was developed, making it a national priority crime, improving the RPP and expanding the commandos and police reservist in rural areas, and demanding further research on this phenomenon. At the same time, a longer-term policy for rural safety was to be developed.

8 THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY ON FARM ATTACKS, 2001-2003

This chapter will focus on how the findings of the Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks affected the perceptions of farm attacks. First, it will give background to the task of the Committee and the context in which it took place. Second, the statistics used in this report will be analysed and explained since statistics were the foundation on which the initial politicisation took place. These statistics will be used to verify the four most dominant claims, namely that farm attacks are on the rise, that farm attacks are directed against the white community, that farm attacks are politically motivated, and lastly that farm murders are disproportionate when compared with the national murder rate.

8.1 THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY

Despite the customized policy to prevent and combat farm attacks, the number of attacks kept rising from 759 attacks with 142 deaths in 1998 to 813 attacks with 144 deaths in 1999. In May 2000, Agri Sa, TAU and the Agricultural Employers Association formed an umbrella organisation for farmers concerned about farm attacks called Action Stop Farm Attacks (ASFA). ASFA launched a countrywide signature campaign, collecting 372.000 signatures by November 2000 (Human Rights Watch 2001, 145). The organisation claimed that farm attacks were unique for several reasons. Namely that the high degree of violence involved almost exclusively black on white violence, that in virtually all cases the victim was unknown to one or more of the perpetrators, the fact that in recent events nothing had been taken, that perpetrators would in most cases wait for hours for the farmer to return, rape his wife and kill the farmer, and that revenge cannot be the motive in the vast majority of cases since only five percent of farm attacks were carried out by the farmers' own workers. Therefore, "the motive for farm attacks lie in hatred for whites, hatred for farmers, and to drive whites off the land" (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 197). The ASFA's spokesperson Mr. Weber estimated that half of all farm attacks were motivated by ordinary crime, but "race, political motivation, hatred for farmers and the inflammatory statements of farmers play a role in the motivation" (Ibidem). In April 2000, the TAU saw farm attacks as "ideologically driven; we are rushing into a situation similar to that in Zimbabwe with the pressure on agriculture in general and the transformation regarding land. The intent is to make land reform affordable, and the farm attacks are part of the pressure applied to speed up the process. You must see the total picture. We can't come to another conclusion" (Human Rights Watch 2001, 147). Although they admitted to having no evidence for an orchestrated campaign, the circumstantial evidence suggested that farm attacks must be placed in perspective. The HRW linked this statement to the 1955 Freedom Charter promise that "the land should be divided among those who work it" (Ibidem).

In order to establish the motives behind farm attacks, the Minister of Safety and Security, Mr. Tswete, announced in January 2001 that farm attacks were to be researched by an independent committee. Tswete instructed the Committee to “leave no stone unturned” even if that meant that it would take longer than envisaged (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 16). The terms of reference of the Committee were “to inquire into the ongoing spate of attacks on farms, which include violent criminal acts such as murder, robbery, rape, etc, to determine the motives and factors behind these attacks and to make recommendations on their findings” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 18). After two years of studying the available literature on farm attacks, concluding interviews, and analysing the available data, the 487-page final Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Farm Attacks was published in July 2003.

The Committee identified two issues the debate on farm attacks was essentially comprised of. First, whether “the overwhelming majority of farm attacks were indeed merely criminal in terms of the motives of perpetrators” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 408). Secondly, and considering the claims of the organized agriculture and the social movements as more important, “to what extent are farm attacks driven by what are fundamentally political issues (in that they relate to power structures and dynamics in pre- and post-1994 South Africa), *specifically as they relate to land*, and the imperative to return white-held land to the indigenous people posited as the original owners of the land?” (Ibidem) Therefore, “the primary task of this committee is to assess whether there is, from the body of material it has amassed during the research, any factual basis on which to conclude that there is substance to theories that claim that farm attacks are politically motivated, especially insofar as land issues are concerned” (Ibidem).

The Committee acknowledged that the definition of the concept ‘farm attack’ had given considerable problems, even though “most people seem to know exactly what is meant by a farm attack” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 20). Both in common law or in statutory provisions there was no specific crime labelled farm attack. Rather, it is “the manifestation of crimes such as robbery (usually with aggravating circumstances), house-breaking with the intent to rob and robbery (usually also with aggravating circumstances), murder, rape, assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm, malicious injury to property, arson, etc” (Ibidem).

The Committee had slightly modified the CIAC definition from 1998 to:

Attacks on farms and smallholdings refer to acts aimed at the person of residents, workers, and visitors to farms and smallholdings, whether with the intent to murder, rape, rob or inflict bodily harm. In addition, all actions aimed at disrupting farming activities as a commercial

concern, whether for motives related to ideology, labour disputes, land issues, revenge, grievances, racist concerns or intimidation, should be included (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 8).

Excluded from this definition are cases related to domestic violence, drunkenness, or 'resulting from commonplace social interaction between people' (Ibidem). Included in this definition are the specific crimes of murder, attempted murder, rape, assault with the intent to do grievous bodily harm, robbery, vehicle hijacking, malicious damage to property where the damage exceeds ZAR 10.000, - (€ 655, -), and arson (Ibidem).

8.2 THE CLAIMS VERSUS THE STATISTICS

As discussed in a previous chapter, the statistical rise in farm attacks was the pretext for the initial securitisation. However, "to the disappointment of the Committee, it turned out that much of the statistical data on which it had hoped to be able to rely, was both incomplete and unreliable, requiring careful interpretation. On some matters no statistics were available, and the Committee had to try and compile the necessary statistics to the best of its ability" (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 19). The statistical data on farm attacks were not available from the SAPS for the simple reason that there existed no crime as a farm attack, but only the crimes committed during a farm attack as in robbery, murder, rape and housebreaking (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 29).

The commission had to rely on three bodies which collected statistics on farm attacks. First, the SAUU/Agri SA had been collecting statistics on farm attacks and murders since 1991, but it was not clear to the Committee how accurate these figures were, since the information came primarily, though not exclusively, from local agricultural societies. The caveat is then that the emphasis may be on affiliated commercial farmers rather than unaffiliated smallholders. "These statistics were obviously not intended to be totally complete, but rather sufficient to identify the problem and to demonstrate trends" (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 30). Second, the CIAC started collecting statistics as part of the customized policy in 1997.¹⁰ However, the CIAC was convinced that not all information available at ground level was reported to them. Third, the NOCOC started keeping statistics on farm attacks for operational purposes after it was declared a priority crime in 1998. However, the information was processed as soon as possible after an attack and therefore not needed to be absolutely accurate. The accuracy for the database was therefore estimated about 90% (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 30).

With these statistics, the Committee tried to verify several claims regarding farm attacks and rural safety, of which four will be highlighted.

¹⁰ See previous chapter.

8.2.1 Claim one: The murders and attacks are on the rise.

In order to verify this claim, the statistics of the three organizations were collected. First, the SAAU / Agri SA came to a total of 3065 attacks from 1991 to 1997, with 677 murders. Second, the CIAC identified 3932 attacks from 1997 to 2001, with 661 murders. Third, the NICOC database contained 3544 farm attacks with 541 murders were identified stretching from 1998 to 2001 (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 30). In an effort to combine these statistics, the Committee decided to use a combination of the SAUU, and the CIAC. The SAUU figures were used from 1991 to 1996 since they were the only ones available for that period, and for 1997 since the CIAC figure for that year was deemed unreliable since attacks on smallholdings were not being reported. In the combined statistics for the years 1991 to 2001, the Committee has identified 6564 attacks from the period between 1991 and 2001, with a total of 1254 murders. See figure 1.

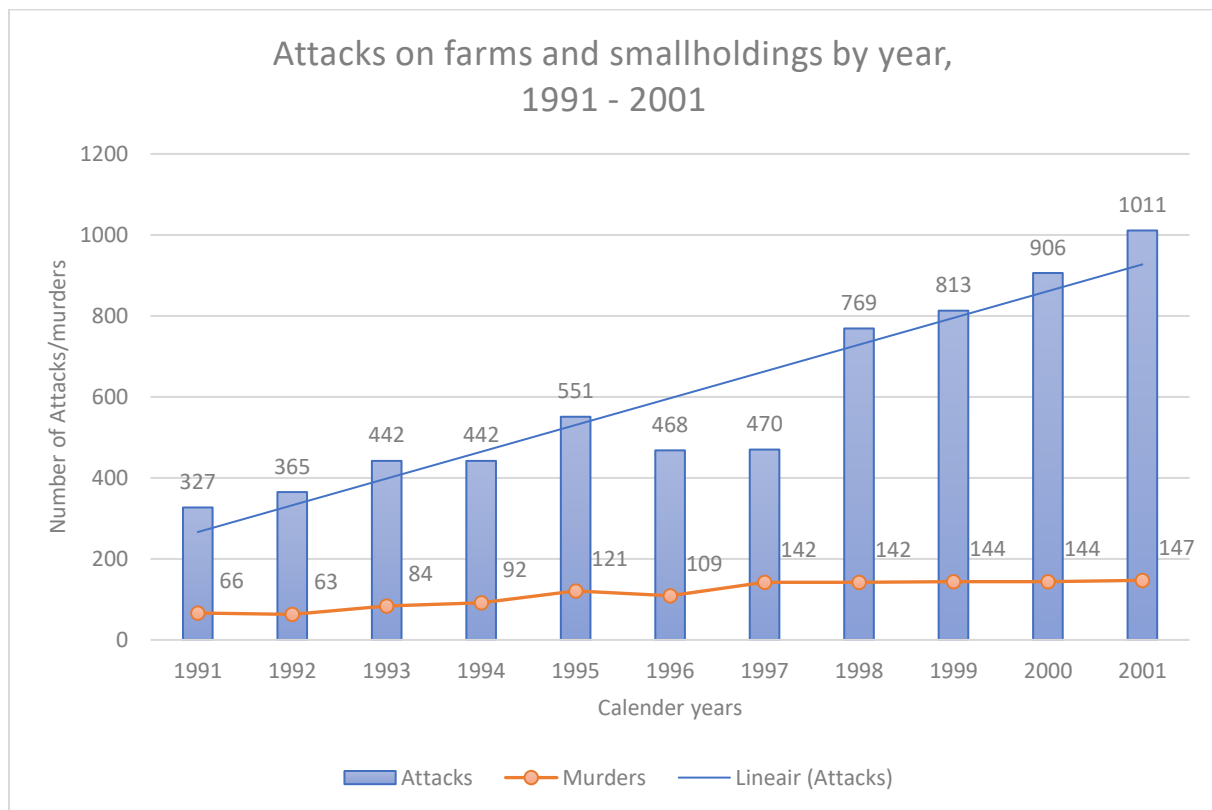


Figure 1 Attacks on farms and smallholdings by year, 1991 - 2001. (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 20)

Both the number of attacks and the number of murders had increased since 1991. Since the numbers prior 1998 are from the SAUU, the Committee deemed it doubtful that the all farm attacks following the new definition would be included as the SAUU’s emphasis lies on commercial farmers. Therefore, the number of actual farm attacks may have been higher. The increase since 1998 may also have come as a result of improvement in reporting farm attacks. The number of attacks in 1996 and 1997, as well as the sharp murder increase in 1997, remained ‘inexplicable’ (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 34).

Thus, this figure may give the impression that the number of farm attacks rapidly grew. However, underreporting in the early years, since the SAUU was not likely to include attacks on non-commercial farmers, and more accurate reporting of smallholdings in the later years affected the linear line. Later, the CIAC made a distinction between attacks on farms and smallholdings when registering farm attacks since 2001. This is included in table 1.

**RATIO BETWEEN ATTACKS ON FARMS AND SMALLHOLDINGS IN
2001 (CIAC DATABASE)**

Province	Farms	Smallholdings	Total
Eastern Cape	66	7	73
Free State	30	2	32
Gauteng	18	260	278
KwaZulu-Natal	108	12	120
Limpopo	35	17	52
Mpumalanga	234	43	277
Northern Cape	12	3	15
North West	87	30	117
Western Cape	40	7	47
TOTAL	630	381	1011

Table 1 Ratio between attacks on farms and smallholdings in 2001 (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 26)

Almost two out of three farm attacks occurred on a farm, with a third of the attacks taking place on a smallholding. However, this figure is distorted since sixty-eight percent of all attacks on smallholdings took place in Gauteng. The average percentage when Gauteng is left out of the equation is only sixteen percent. Nevertheless, of the 1011 attacks, 630 attacks took place on farms. Even if one assumes that the figures of the SAAU/Agri SA were based solely on farms, there is still a considerable rise visible.

Included in the report are the provisional and unverified figures of 2002 from the CIAC as well. According to the CIAC, the number of attacks stabilised from 1011 in 2001 to 1000 in 2002. The murders however decreased by almost twenty-five percent from 147 in 2001 to 112 in 2002. It is important to note that 'the CIAC warned that no definite conclusions should be drawn from them' (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 24). It is therefore surprising that these figures are not only included in the report, but that the Committee concluded that the number of attacks "have stabilized during 2002 and may even be decreasing at this stage" and that the murder rate in 2002 "dropped considerably" (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 445).

8.2.2 Claim two: Farm attacks are almost exclusively directed against the white community.

The CIAC provided insight in the racial breakdown of the victims of farm attacks. See figure 2.

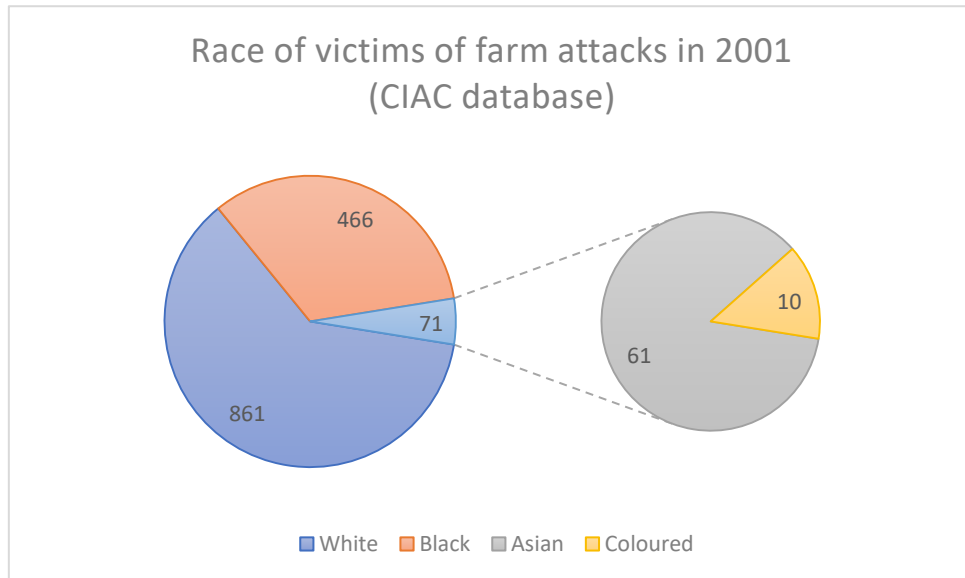


Figure 2 Race of victims of farm attacks in 2001 (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 37)

In 2001, the Committee concluded that white people made up “just over sixty percent of the victims of farm attacks”, black people thirty-three, Asians four percent and coloured less than one percent (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 446). The Committee also analysed the NOCOC database from 1998 to 2001, in which they had to rely on various indicators, since race was not specified prior to 2002. For 3306 victims, the race could be determined “fairly accurately”, resulting in a total of 2446 white victims or seventy-three percent (Ibidem). When broken down by year, the number of white victims gradually declined from seventy-eight percent in 1998, to seventy-four in 1999, and with a small rise to seventy-six percent in 2000, back down to sixty-seven percent in 2001. The Committee acknowledged that this decrease could also be explained by the fact that more attacks on other races were reported as the years before. Furthermore, the Committee acknowledged that there was a considerably higher risk for white victims of farm attacks to be killed or injured in comparison with black victims. However, “except for individual cases, the Committee could find no general underlying racial motive for this discrepancy” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 446). According to the investigating officers, the farmers that had been attacked were mainly elderly people living alone and thus considered soft targets (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 37).

Thus, in contrary to the general perception, one in three victims was black, notwithstanding the fact that the vast majority of the victims were white. Additionally, white victims did have a higher chance of getting killed and injured in the process. However, there was no general underlying racial motive that may explain this occurrence.

8.2.3 Claim three: Farm Attacks are politically motivated.

This claim may be seen as imperative to the Committee, as its primary task was to determine the motive of farm attacks. In order to do that, 3544 cases in the NOCOC database were analysed. Since more than one motive could be determined in a single case, the Committee identified 2644 cases in which the apparent primary motive was either robbery, intimidation, political or racial, or labour related (See table 1).

APPARENT MOTIVE FOR FARM ATTACKS 1998 – 2001 (NICOC DATABASE)

Year	Robbery	Intimidation	Political/racial	Labour Related	TOTAL
1998	552	47	17	8	624
1999	576	33	10	13	632
2000	602	74	10	15	701
2001	631	34	15	7	687
Total	2361	188	52	43	2644
PERCENTAGE	89,3%	7,1%	2,0%	1,6%	100,0%

Table 2 Apparent Motive for Farm Attacks 1998 – 2001 (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 36)

Of all clearly identifiable primary motives for attack, the vast majority were identified by the Committee as robbery. Furthermore, this number “is likely to be substantially higher, since the NOCOC database does not accurately reflect the items stolen” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 36). The Committee does acknowledge that there is a small minority of cases, two percent, where there was indeed evidence of racial or political motivation such as the utterance of attackers. This percentage may be higher, since the assumption of the Committee is that “overt indications of racial and political motive will not always be present” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 37). Then again, assumptions that robbers justified attacks by giving it a political colour, or tried to frame it as such in order to throw the police off existed as well. Furthermore, of the attacks identified as political, no connections could be found between the perpetrators and political groupings. “Investigating officers generally blame the agricultural unions for persuading farmers that the attacks are politically motivated, despite there being evidence to the contrary” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 186). One of the other theories on farm attacks, that they are related to labour disputes and grudges, proved to be the exception as well with less than two percent. The other allegation, that farm attacks are generally organized and carried out with military precision was also refuted. The Committee concluded that although farm attacks were often well planned and preceded by reconnaissance, there was no solid base that organized structures like political groupings are behind the attack.

The perception that farm attacks were politically-inspired seemed to be based on the facts of “a few serious and highly publicised cases, which did not reflect the general pattern of farm attacks” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 411). The Committee had interviewed around eighty-six investigating officers, who had reached the consensus that the primary motive in the greater majority of the cases was robbery. According to the investigative officers interviewed, a perception among perpetrators was that farmers were wealthy, based on the fact that farmers have safes in their homes. Furthermore, farmers are robbed for their firearms, cell phones, electrical equipment and vehicles (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 186). Only very few cases were politically or racially inspired. This view was shared among fifteen state attorneys from the Directorate of Public Prosecution. To add to this consensus, none of the perpetrators involved in this research or previous research admitted to political motives, while that would have provided some moral justification for their crimes.

Considering the sharp increase from 1997 to 1998 with close to sixty-four percent in figure 1, which some saw ‘as evidence of the beginning of some sort of concerted and organised campaign against farmers. The Committee is not convinced that that was the case at all’ (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 33-34). Because “if there were some sinister force behind the apparent increase in farm attacks, one would have expected there to be other differences indicating, for example, a different motive for the attacks” (Ibidem).

There were two more factors contributing to the popular belief that farm attacks were politically motivated. First, there seemed to be the perception that farm attacks where nothing has been taken occurred frequently. This has added to the belief that simple robbery has not been the motive, enlarged by the publicity that these kinds of cases received. This publicity in turn reinforces the perception of a common phenomenon. However, the Committee concluded that “the belief that nothing has been taken in a particular farm attack is often based on suppositions and incorrect information” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 49). After analysis of the NOCOC database, almost in a fourth of all cases it was discovered that nothing was stolen or it was unclear if anything had been taken. Nevertheless, in most of the cases, the Committee found a logical explanation in the fact that the attacker was fought off or help arrived in time. This was reinforced by the investigating officers interviewed by the Committee, who agreed it was rare for perpetrators to leave emptyhanded. “If they do so they are either disturbed or they panic and flee” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 185).

Secondly, the amount of excessive violence during farm attacks had been offered as proof “that there is an intimidatory process at work to force farmers off land” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 413). The most serious cases receive the most prominence in the media, which in turn leads to the perception that those are typical of the majority of the attacks. However, the Committee concluded that in 2001 only one in three farm attack victims sustained injuries, and one in ten victims was killed.

Since the Committee found that most farm attacks were motivated by robbery, two comparisons were made with other robberies. Cash-in-transit robberies, another priority crime with an extreme violent reputation, saw one in twenty-eight victims killed. When house robberies in the Eastern Cape were compared to farm attacks in the same province, one in six victims was injured. Thus, the Committee concluded that the figures “seem to indicate that farmers run a relatively higher risk of being seriously injured and killed” (Ibidem).

8.2.4 Claim four: The murder rate on the farming community is disproportionate.

The murder rate per 100.000 is a good method to compare the severity of an issue. Different organisations claimed that when the murder rate among farmers was compared with the South African population in general it would be disproportionate. As the political party Freedom Front wrote in their submission to the Committee: “While the national murder rate is 61 per 100 000, farmers are being murdered at a rate of 274 per 100 000” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 219).¹¹ A study from Potchefstroom University stated “a farmer is four times more likely to be murdered than a member of the general public”, basing their figure on the 1999 figures of 144 farm murders per 61.000 commercial farmers compared with the national murder rate of 55 per 100.000 (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 37). However, according to the Committee it had proven to be virtually impossible to calculate the prevalence of crime in its incidence per 100.000 of the population. “The reason for this is that the total number of farmers, farm residents or even farms is unknown. The same applies to smallholdings” (Ibidem). To give an indication for 2001, Agri SA estimated that there were about 45.000 large-scale farmers in South Africa, while TAU SA estimated 40.000 commercial farmers excluding farm managers who manage a farm for someone else. The SANDF estimated that there were approximately 256.000 commercial farmers. The number of farm workers included in the definition is even harder to determine, with official estimates for 2001 of about 700.000 in the formal broad agricultural sector and almost as many people in the informal. However, people residing, and visiting farms and smallholdings are included in the definition. Thus “it is impossible to accurately calculate the actual number of people living on farms and smallholding in the country” (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 283-284). A researcher of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) assumed that there were 4,5 million farm residents in 1998 and 31 murders committed on farms (excluding smallholdings) in the first five months of 1998. Based on these figures, Committee came to a ratio of 2.4 farm murders per 100.000 compared to 52 general murders per 100.000, while pointing out that this is based on an assumption. Nevertheless, it is less than one percent of the ratio offered by Freedom Front.

¹¹ In 2003, the Freedom Front would combine forces with other political parties to form the Freedom Front Plus.

Thus, as long as it is impossible to accurately calculate the actual amount of people encompassed by the definition, it is hardly surprising that there is no ratio to calculate. All calculations of a ratio are therefore speculative.

What was possible however, was to determine which percentage of specific crimes in South Africa were committed during farm attacks (See Table 2).

**CRIMES COMMITTED DURING FARM ATTACKS AS PERCENTAGE
OF CRIMES IN GENERAL: 2001**

Type of crime	South Africa	Farm attacks	Percentage
Murder	21180	147	0,69%
Attempted murder	29994	245	0,82%
Rape	53976	70	0,13%
Armed robbery	119466	689	0,58%

Table 3 Crimes committed during farm attacks as percentage of crimes in general in 2001 (Committee of Inquiry 2003, 31)

The Committee notes that the number of armed robberies is quite incorrect, since the police may not always register robberies when a more serious crime has occurred, such as murder or rape. Nevertheless, these figures show that the identified crimes committed during farm attacks are all less than 1% of the total number of crimes that year.

8.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter focussed on the Committee of Inquiry who were appointed by government to conduct independent research on the phenomenon of farm attacks. Agricultural unions continued to claim a racial and political motivation behind these attacks. The task of the committee was to determine, by using scientific research, if there was a factual basis for this claim. Even though the statistics were, due to a variety of reasons, not as reliable as hoped, the Committee could verify claims based on these statistics supported by interviews and literature. The first claim that murders and attacks were on the rise had been proven true, with the note that the statistical discrepancy between the different sources could have been the reason. The second claim that farm attacks were almost exclusively directed against the white community was proven untrue. Furthermore, it was proven that thirty-eight percent of all attacks were directed against non-whites. The third and most important claim, that farm attacks were politically motivated, was proven untrue as a political or racial motive was present in only two

percent of the identifiable cases. Robbery proved to be the primary motive in the vast majority (eighty-nine percent) of all cases. The two factors that contributed to this claim were proven untrue as well: the majority of cases where nothing had been stolen had explainable causes, the excessive amount of violence used seemed to happen in the exceptions, with only one in three victims sustained injuries and one in ten killed. The last claim, that the murder rate on the farming community is disproportionate, had been proven not only untrue, but impossible to calculate since there is no accurate census on how many people live and work on farms, including family. Thus, all the claims that were based on perceptions and own data have been proven untrue by the research of the Committee. The narrative of a friend-enemy distinction that proved successful in the initial securitisation, the white farmer versus the racial/political motivated black perpetrator, had been refuted by scientific research.

9 THE GRADUAL DISMANTLING OF THE CUSTOMISED POLICY 2003 -2011

This chapter will focus on how the customised policy was gradually dismantled from 2003 to 2011. However, to provide the necessary context it will begin with the rise to power of president Mbeki in 1999. Second, criticism on the parts of the security structures in rural areas will be given using the 2001 report *Unequal protection* from the Human Rights Watch (HRW) for further context. Third, the disbanding of the commando system will be addressed. Lastly, with the ending of the SAPS publishing their statistics in 2006 and their new inclusive rural strategy of 2011, it will be argued that this marked the desecuritisation of farm attacks.

9.1 THE RISE OF PRESIDENT MBEKI

When president Mandela retired from public office in June 1999, his legacy was the emphasis on reconciliation and shaping a “rainbow nation” with a government that “concentrated on consolidating its political authority and formulating new policies that would transform South Africa” (Gastrow and Shaw 2001, 259). His ANC successor would be Thabo Mbeki, a key figure in the negotiations after he returned from exile in 1990. In the 1999 election, the ANC won sixty-six percent of the vote, just one seat short of a two-thirds majority in Parliament (Beck 2013, 204). The emphasis of the presidency of Mbeki would shift towards transformation and delivery of expectations, “particularly for those who felt that the new democracy had not benefited them” (Gastrow and Shaw 2001, 6). In rural areas, anger at the lack of transformation was widespread among young men, the “frustrated generation of un- or underemployed young people, with more education than their parents and less tendency to accept their lot, but without marketable skills. They have seen democracy come to South Africa, but have little to show for it themselves – though they see the privileged status of white farm owners apparently unaltered by the new order” (Human Rights Watch 2001, 156).

9.2 CRITIQUE ON THE UNEQUAL PROTECTION IN RURAL AREAS

The “privileged status of the white farm owners” was the main point of criticism of the Human Rights Watch (HRW) with their 2001 report *Unequal Protection: The State Response to Violent Crime on South African Farms*. According to the HRW, this status derived from white farmers maintaining their historically close relationships with state institutions in many areas, as well as their much more powerful economic position. Especially black women were dominated and oppressed by the “continuing racism, racial discrimination, and racial tension combine[d] with gender discrimination” (Human Rights Watch 2001, 238-239). Their criticism is also pointed at the phenomenon of ‘farm attacks. It starts with the definition itself. “Despite the SAPS findings that the motives for the violent

crime against farm owners are largely criminal, the police and the army continue to use the terminology of 'farm attacks', reinforcing, through the use of the word 'attack', the idea that there is a military or terrorist basis for the crimes, rather than a crime" (Human Rights Watch 2001, 156-157).¹² According to the HRW, the statistics on farm attacks and smallholdings are problematic since 'farm' nor "smallholding" are not properly defined. The former tends to refer to large commercial farms, while the latter is understood to be small plots surrounding big cities. Therefore considered "effectively part of the city crime environment, where strangers do not attract attention, they are also quite isolated from their neighbours and distant from police assistance", making them particularly vulnerable to crime (Human Rights Watch 2001, 141). Since "virtually all violent crime committed on smallholdings" had been committed by people unknown to the victims, the HRW found little reason to distinguish the motive for attacking smallholdings from crime committed in neighbouring suburbs, "especially since gratuitous violence is a feature of much South African crime, wherever committed" (Human Rights Watch 2001, 156). Furthermore, "while the definition does not refer to race, in practice racial issues dominate the way the statistics are collected – just as they dominate the decision to start collecting the statistics in the first place" (Human Rights Watch 2001, 142). The HRW argues that there are no reliable statistics of any kind relating to farm owners assaulting farm workers, likely concealed for outside observers by "the enclosed world of the farm, between people who have a long-term relationship to maintain and where power relations are very unequal", and by the isolated locations that form an obstacle for farm workers to report abuse (Human Rights Watch 2001, 63-69). Finally, the exclusion of "commonplace social interaction" excludes the violence that affects most farm residents and "gives the impression (...) that only violent crimes affecting property owners are of importance to the state" (Human Rights Watch 2001, 142-143).

The criticism of the HRW was further directed at the commando structures, that was perceived on the one hand by many farmworkers as an anachronism, as in this time it would only lead to abuse and should thus be abolished. According to the HRW, "the 'farmwatch' system and the use of commandos and private security to protect farming communities has increased security for (mostly white) farm owners. (...) However, in too many cases, local commandos, 'farmwatch' structures, or private security companies are simply acting to protect the interests of farmers (...) with little accountability to or control by the wider community" (Human Rights Watch 2001, 232). Especially the private initiatives that emerged after many left the commando structure had a lack of accountability, reporting only to the farm watch structures or the people paying them (Ibidem). On the other hand, the commandos were seen, including by many of those involved in the rural protection plan at national

¹² This critique was echoed in 2005 by Steinberg, who called farm attacks a 'heavily loaded term which suggested a blurring of the lines between criminal aggression and guerrilla activity, and between acquisitiveness and political revenge' (J. Steinberg 2005a, 8).

level, as “an essential part of the system, and the main reason for the high arrest rate in cases of violent crime against farm owners or managers, due to their rapid response capabilities” (Ibidem).

Thus, the HRW recommended that the RPP had to be restructured to serve all residents of the farming community, that the SANDF forces should not be involved in policing, and private security initiatives should be brought under more control to prevent abuse. Furthermore, the HRW stressed the need for accurate statistics on all forms of violent crime on farms.

9.3 THE DISBANDING OF THE COMMANDO SYSTEM

During his State of the Nation Address in 2003, President Mbeki praised the hard work of the South African security agencies who were implementing the National Crime Combatting Strategy. With priority crimes targeted and areas with the highest incidence of serious crime policed, the President claimed with confidence that definite progress was being made. The murder rate had been reduced by almost seventeen percent since 1999, and other serious crime in targeting areas had either been reduced or stabilised (South African Government 2003). Nevertheless, the government would continue to improve the capacity of the SAPS. President Mbeki continued that:

Measures will be taken to ensure that the structures meant to support the security agencies, such as the SANDF commandos and police reservists are properly regulated to do what they were set up for. In this regard, in order to ensure security for all in the rural areas including the farmers, government will start in the near future to phase out SANDF commandos, at the same time as we create in their place, a new system whose composition and ethos accord with the requirements of all rural communities (South African Government 2003).

This statement came as a surprise to police officials such as Johan Burger as the 1999 Rural Protection Plan was firmly based on the commandos.¹³

I was listening to the State of the Nation Address by the president, I had a tv in my office, and suddenly out of the blue I heard (...) that the decision was taken to phase out the commando system, and it will be replaced by alternative structures of the police. And immediately I started getting calls (...) from all over the place, people saying “you know what are the alternative structures that you’re going to place?” I said, “I have no idea, I hear this from the President for the first time”.¹⁴

¹³ Dr. Johan Burger was Head of Operation Coordination for the SAPS. He coordinated national crime combatting operations and special security operations. He chaired multiple priority committees, including rural safety.

¹⁴ Author’s interview with Dr Johan Burger, Senior Researcher for the Institute for Security Studies, on 17 April 2017.

Although Dr Burger could hear ‘a growing displeasure (...) with the fact that the commandos continued to exist (...) as part of the old era before 1994’ the commando system was a keystone in the RPP. (Even though the commandos increasingly gained in terms of black members, the command structure remained predominantly white. Thus, he expected ‘some intervention at some stage (...), we never expected it to be so suddenly, abrupt almost.’ As he was never consulted, he could not have warned against it as ‘the whole Rural Safety Plan would fall apart because it was based on the commando system.’

According to Kobus Visser from Agri SA, they were not consulted in this decision either.¹⁵ ‘Two years before that, we developed the Agricultural Strategy with the government, signed by president Mbeki, which made provision for the commando system, and he decided to disband the system without talking to us (...) [despite thinking] we were partners in that strategy.’ Furthermore, ‘you took away a structure that worked very well, that was a quick reaction structure (...) not only to protect the farming community, but the whole community, and they also played a role in disasters’.

Thus, the statement of President Mbeki created an unsurprising amount of controversy, according to Steinberg. On the one hand the “government has been accused of leaving isolated white families of the agricultural hinterland vulnerable to violent crime. On the other, it has been lauded for closing down a quasi-private militia sensitive to white farmers’ security but insensitive to black citizens’ rights” (J. Steinberg 2005a, 2). Nevertheless, when the 1996 White Paper of Defence had announced the withdrawal from a non-policing role, the SANDF were involved in three domestic crime fighting roles: urban crime combatting, rural safety, and borderline protection.¹⁶ Their urban crime combatting role had already ended in 2001 and as a result the ending of their other policing roles could have been expected. The commandos were to be gradually disbanded from 2003 to 2009 and to be replaced by police reservists. The problem was however, according to Steinberg, that the police reserve is a voluntary structure while the non-area bound commandos are paid for their contribution, forming the primary source of income for the households of twelve to fifteen thousand commando members. “Thus, when 17 Commandos around the country ceased operating, it came to no surprise that the vast majority of their members did not apply to join the police reserves” (J. Steinberg 2005a, 49).

In his research on three rural communities in 2005, Steinberg found that the perception of the delivering of policing services to rural areas was extremely poor. Furthermore, he found that allowing the Commandos to cease operating in the absence of a replacement capacity weakened the policing

¹⁵ Author’s interview with Kobus Visser, Director Corporate Liason with Agri SA, on 4 May 2017.

¹⁶ See chapter 3.

in these areas and “further sours the relationship between the SAPS and the farming community” (Ibidem).

In May 2005, the Safety and Security Minister announced the SAPS plan of recruiting all 50.000 part-time Territorial Reserve members into the SAPS Reserve. This was never realised. To give an indication of the incorporation in the SAPS, the total commando strength at the end of March 2004 was 43.976, of which 17.957 were utilised, and 26.019 dormant (J. Steinberg 2005a, 11). When the SAPS published their annual report at the end of the financial year 2007/2008, they stated that twenty commando headquarters and 183 commando units had been closed down since 2005, while only 1842 commandos had been recruited as reservist. They would join the total number of 66.394 police reservist recruited by 2008 (SAPS 2008, 97). Thus the commandos, according to Chris van Zyl from TAU SA, ‘would be transferred to the police and would become police reservists and they would carry on as if nothing has happened. But of course, it never materialised. So the closing down of the commandos, until today [in 2017], created a void in the rural areas’.¹⁷

9.4 THE FURTHER DISMANTLING OF CUSTOMISED POLICY.

Two further important developments can be identified in this time period. First, the SAPS stopped publishing their statistics on farm attacks and farm murders in their annual report for the financial year 2007/2008.¹⁸ There had been a notable decline in both farm attacks and murders around forty percent since 2001/2002 with 140 murders during 1069 attacks, to 88 murders during 636 in 2005/2006. However, in 2006/2007 the SAPS reported an increase of twenty-five percent in the number of attacks to 794, while the number of murders stabilised with 86 (SAPS 2017). The argument behind this decision was given in 2014 by the SAPS national commissioner Riah Phiyega. According to her, these figures formed part of the general murder figure, and murder is murder, whether “you are murdered in a shebeen or a farm” (SAHRC 2015, 42).¹⁹ Thus, without the data from the SAPS, Dr Burger argued that “the only available database on farm attacks and murders is kept by TAUSA, although it does not have the capacity or capability to monitor the situation as extensively as the SAPS had done. This is because TAUSA is not informed of attacks on smallholdings, where up to 40% of attacks classified as ‘farm attack’ occur” (Burger 2012b). To illustrate, he compares the 2006/2007 figure of 86 murders in 794 attacks from the SAPS with the 60 murders in 94 that TAUSA recorded for the calendar year 2007.²⁰

The second and final step of the identified dismantling was in 2011. Under president Zuma,

¹⁷ Author’s interview with Maj Gen (ret) Chris van Zyl, Assistant general manager for TAU SA, on 10 April 2017.

¹⁸ In South Africa, the financial year is from 1 April to 31 March.

¹⁹ *Shebeens* were illicit bars where unlicensed alcohol was sold as many bars were segregated for whites only under Apartheid. Today, many shebeens are fully legal.

²⁰ Nevertheless, it does illustrate the discrepancy between the two sources.

who succeeded president Mbeki in 2009, the SAPS announced their new Rural Safety Strategy (RSS). In the introduction, the SAPS stated that:

Government views the safety and security of the rural community in South Africa as a priority. The seriousness of continued acts of violence against the rural community, as well as the high levels of stock theft required that a comprehensive and holistic strategy be formulated to support the creation of a safe rural environment and ensure food security. Rural communities contribute to the welfare and prosperity of the country as an economically viable group.

South Africa is characterized by high levels of poverty and underdevelopment, especially in the rural areas. Statistics South Africa reported that in 2006, 43.74% of the population lived in rural areas.

(...) Farmers, farm workers and residents within rural communities are considered soft targets by criminals. This is due to the remoteness of farms, high market value of properties, large distances between farms and villages and the inaccessibility to the police as well as basic infrastructure, such as roads, to support service delivery (SAPS 2011, 1).

Reflecting on the disbanding of the commandos, the creation of new system would “accord with the requirements of all rural communities, and not only focus on the farming community. This fact was echoed by several role players in the rural environment, for example the Human Rights Commission” (SAPS 2011, 3). When the SAPS was made responsible for the roles that the commandos fulfilled in the rural community, the “outdated” RPP had to be reviewed (SAPS 2011, 5). This in turn led to the development and the implementing of the new RSS.

Five things are important to note. Firstly, farm attacks are no longer mentioned, but officially referred to as “acts of violence against person/s on farms and smallholdings” as these locations receive an official definition, expanding the definition further than its agricultural origin (SAPS 2011, 8-9).²¹

Secondly, the first objective in this new RSS was to “improve safety and security within *the entire rural environment*” (SAPS 2011, 7, emphasis by author).

Thirdly, the SAPS defined rural areas as “sparsely populated areas in which people farm or

²¹ A farm is defined as “An area of land and its buildings used for agricultural and livestock purposes, including cattle posts and rural villages where subsistence farming takes place”.

A smallholding is defined as a “An agricultural holding that is smaller than a farm, excluding smallholdings where no agricultural activities take place and that is predominantly residential” (SAPS 2011, 9).

depend on natural resources, including villages and small towns that are dispersed through these areas. In addition, it includes large settlements in former homelands, created by apartheid removals, which depend for their survival on migratory labour and remittances” (Integrated Rural Development Framework, 1997 in SAPS 2011, 8). This definition includes commercial farms but excludes peri-urban informal settlements.

Fourthly, the introduction stated that the government views the safety and security of the rural areas as a priority, and that almost forty-four percent of the population lives in these rural areas. Using the population estimate for 2006, that would amount to almost twenty-one million South Africans to provide security and safety to (South African Statistics 2006, 19). Thus according to Dr. Burger, “the RSS is not focussed on the security of farms, but is aimed at rural security in general. In essence this means that the government no longer regards farm security a priority” (Burger 2012b). This critique is shared by Ernst Roets from AfriForum, a South African civil rights watchdog organisation, specifically focussed on the Afrikaner community (AfriForum 2017). Roets claims that ‘the plan is not focussed. So, farm murders is really the problem if you think about rural safety in South Africa, but the plan doesn’t even mentions farm attacks. (...) Our whole argument in the terms of farm killings and farm attacks is that we need a proper focussed counter strategy. But if you don’t even say that there is a problem then you can’t really adress the problem’.²²

Lastly and most importantly, the original RPP was developed to counter the perceived racially and politically motivated campaign to kill and drive white farmers of their lands. This formed the existential threat that demanded urgent attention and action to save South African citizens from suffering and the nation itself from economic disruption and potential social instability. The RSS was developed with the vision “to create a safe and secure rural environment where all inhabitants can prosper and live without fear” because “farmers, farm workers and residents within rural communities are considered soft targets by criminals” (SAPS 2011, 9). Even though the government still considered it a priority to ensure the safety and security in rural areas, with the vision of the RSS it can be argued that there has been a normalisation in the provision of security. Thus, the issue had shifted “out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the political sphere” (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998, 4). In other words, the issue had been desecuritized.

9.5 CONCLUSION

With the ascending of president Mbeki in 1999, his key objective was to deliver change to parts of the population who had yet to benefit from the transformation. This was common among the rural populations. In their 2001 report, the HRW criticised the unequal distribution of rural protection which

²² Personal interview with Ernst Roets, deputy chief executive of AfriForum, on 11 April 2017.

benefitted the privileged white communities, while the black population suffered under their security structures. The RPP needed to be restructured with no role for the military in policing roles. This advice seemed to resonate with the government, as president Mbeki announced the disbanding of the commandos and the transfer of their policing roles to the SAPS. As the number of farm attacks and murders declined from 2001/2002 to 2005/2006 by almost forty percent, the number of attacks rose with twenty-five percent in the following year. This marked the end of the publication of the SAPS statistics. As the commandos were gradually disbanded, few joined the police reservists. As the commandos were the keystone of the RPP, the new RSS was developed and implemented. This was an inclusive strategy, encompassing forty-four percent of the population. Although the RSS considered the safety and security of their population from criminality a priority, there was no threat of an existential nature as there was when the original RPP was developed. Thus, the issue of farm attacks had been desecuritized.

10 THE ANALYSIS OF THE DESECURITISATION

This chapter will analyse the gradual dismantling of the customised policy as discussed in the previous chapter to determine which form of desecuritisation can be identified. To recall the concept of Hansen as given in the Theory chapter, the four forms of desecuritisation are *change through stabilisation*, *replacement*, *rearticulation*, and *silencing*. (Hansen 2012) As Hansen identified that the form of *change through stabilisation* has no longer been relevant in political and academic use since the specific context of the Cold War, this form will not be included in this analysis. First, the desecuritisation through *replacement* or *rearticulation* will be considered. Next, desecuritisation through *silencing* will be considered.

10.1 DESECURITISATION THROUGH REPLACEMENT OR REARTICULATION

To recall, in the form of desecuritisation through *replacement*, one issue is moved out of security while another is simultaneously securitised. *Rearticulation* refers to a form of desecuritisation that removes an issue from the securitised by actively offering a political solution to the threats, dangers, and grievances in question (Hansen 2012). As seen in chapter on the initial securitisation, the statistical rise of farm attacks and murders was the initial reason to politicise the issue. The perceived threat to white farmers and the nation's economy and social stability through a racially and politically motivated campaign was in turn existential enough for president Mandela to securitise the issue. As part of this customised policy, the independent report in the Report chapter had refuted this perceived existential threat as a merely crime. Furthermore, the referent object had already been redefined to be more inclusive in the prelude to this report, with farmers, workers, families and visitors on farms and smallholdings included in the definition. Nevertheless, the customised policy remained in place as the RPP played a role in combatting crime to a broader part of the population, privileging the white population with an unequal form of protection. This was gradually dismantled by the demilitarisation of rural policing, and the development and implementation of a new rural strategy in 2011. According to this strategy, the referent object was expanded to citizens more than just on farms and smallholdings, expanding it to forty-four percent of the population. Thus, as the existential threat had proven to be non-existent, the issue of farm attacks and murders were *rearticulated* by the government as incidents on farms and smallholdings as part of the issue of rural crime. There is no case of desecuritisation through *replacement* to identify as the new inclusive referent object was not perceived to be existentially threatened. It is important to note that this does not mean that the initial issue was inherently solved and therefore no longer needed securitisation. To recall the foreword, the murders, tortures and other acts of violence against the residents, workers, family and visitors

continue to this day. However, as part of rural crime it would be addressed through the normal policing policies as part of normal political processes. Therefore, the issue of the incidents on farms and smallholdings had been desecuritized through *articulation*.

This desecuritisation through articulation has been powerful, as a new securitising move was undertaken by the political party FF Plus in 2017. To recall the foreword, the initial request for a debate on the incidents of violence and murders on farms and smallholdings was denied by the Speaker. However, according to Dr Groenewald of the FF Plus, Mbete agreed after Groenewald pointed out that “it is not only white people who are affected by this, but that the murders and attacks hold serious consequences for the security of the country in terms of food security, the stability of the labour market, and economic development in general. White and black people are attacked and murdered. The murder figure of 133 farmers in every 100 000 of the population affects everybody” (South Africa Today 2017).²³ Thus, the first parliamentary debate concerning the recent increase in farm murders and farm attacks took place on 14 March 2017 (Parliament of South Africa 2017).

This thesis will not go in detail on this attempt to re-securitize farm attacks in parliament as the securitising move was rejected by most political parties on a wide range of arguments, ranging from the emphasis on crime in general to historical injustices. However, it does show the power of rearticulation reflected in the words of the Minister of Justice, Micheal Masutha, as closing speaker of the debate.

We understand the vulnerability of farmers when it comes to various contact crimes, and have no desire whatsoever to trivialise the killings and attacks on our compatriots who happen to be farmers, and are mostly white.

Farm killings have got to be understood within the bigger context of criminality in our country, and while they are a major concern, it is pertinent that we do not unduly exaggerate them nor give an impression that there is a widespread political campaign to kill white farmers or drive them into the sea.

Crime statistics from the (...) SAPS, show that from 2001, criminal incidents on farms have been markedly declining in recent years.

(...) The apartheid inheritance of underdeveloped and underserviced rural areas continues to haunt us today. It therefore does not help to single out one particular category of our rural

²³ To recall, this figure is impossible to calculate since no accurate figure exists on how many people are included in the definition.

constituency, farmers and discuss their safety and security challenges, when such challenges actually relate to the broader rural constituency as a whole.

(...) To understand and better respond to crime in rural settings, we must focus on the totality of the context through which crime finds expression. And not on narrow interests that, actually, define the origins of our social consciousness. We must seek a good life for all; not systematically for some. A just approach will assure us all, of a stable future (Parliament of South Africa 2017, 62-67).

During this speech, he emphasises that the “crime statistics from the (...) SAPS, show that from 2001, criminal incidents on farms have been markedly declining in recent years” (Parliament of South Africa 2017, 62-63). See figure 3.

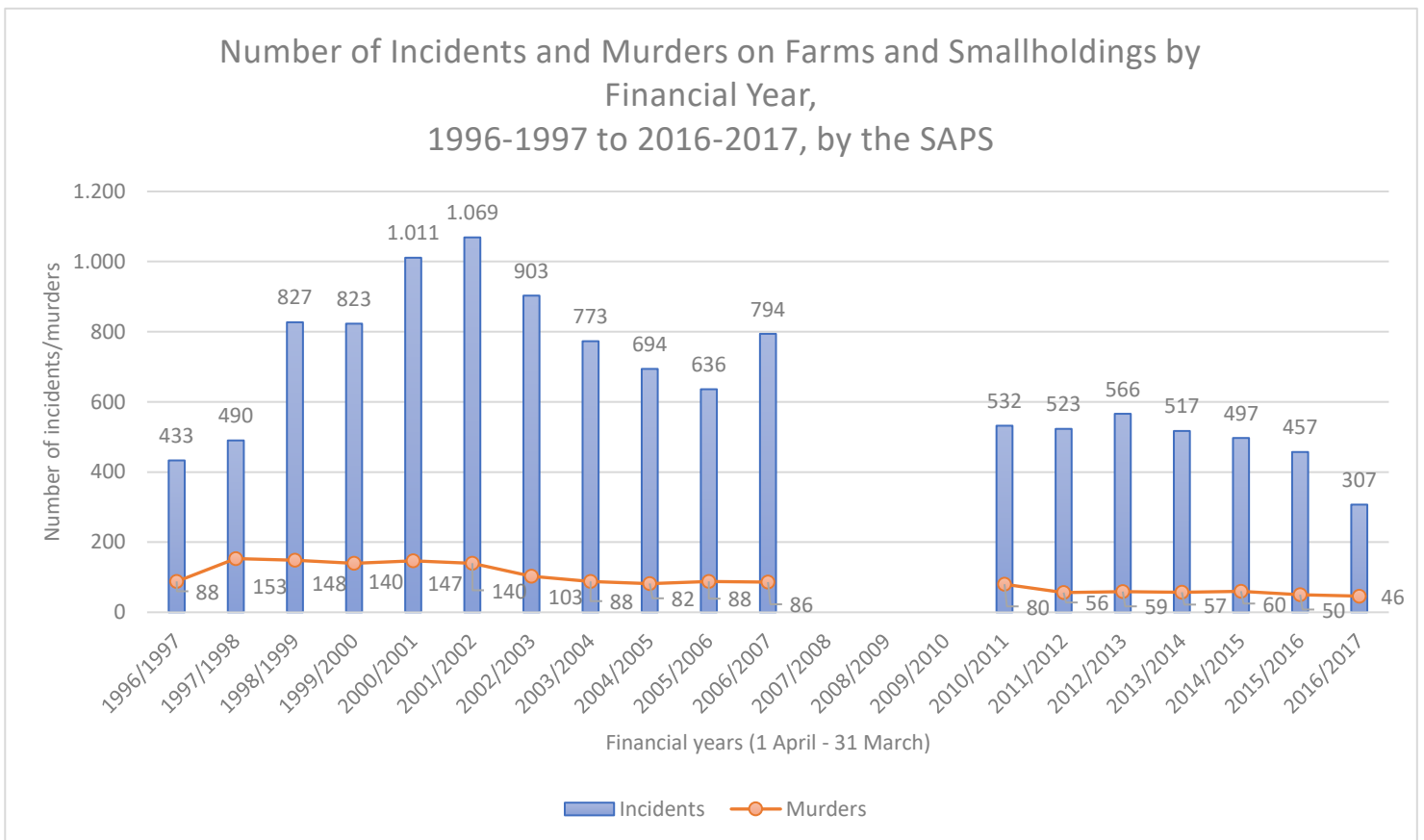


Figure 3 Number of Incidents and Murders on Farms and Smallholdings by Financial Year, 1996-1997 to 2016-2017, by the SAPS (SAPS 2017).

These figures shown were used by the SAPD for their presentation to the Rural Safety Priority Committee on 16 February 2017.²⁴ Note that the numbers from 2007/2008 to 2009/2010 were not made public due to the abolition of publishing of information.

During the debate, the minister pointed out that “in the 2001-02 period (...) there were 1069 incidents on farms, with 103 murders. Meanwhile, in the 2015-16 period, the number of criminal incidents decreased to 457, with subsequent murders reduced to 50. This represents a decrease of about fifty-seven percent in the total number of reported incidents and a decrease of fifty-one percent of the murders. (...) A loss of life is one too many. Thus these statistics are by no means celebratory” (Parliament of South Africa 2017, 63-64). However, the minister uses the murder figure 103 from 2002/2003, as opposed to 140 from 2001/2002.²⁵ Thus, in reality the number of murders has decreased by sixty-four percent. Based on these figures, one could argue that the issue of rural crime in general is effectively being combatted within the normal political sphere.

Furthermore, the Agricultural Research Council refuted claims on the food security of South Africa by pointing out to statistics. In the previous years the number of commercial farmers had declined by more than fifty percent since 1996, to 32.275 commercial farmers in 2007. However, this number is dropping and it was estimated that those numbers would decline to 15.000 individuals over the next fifteen years, causing significant job losses in rural areas (Burger 2012b). However, “just because the number of farms is reduced, does not mean that production has decreased, it is the opposite” (SAHRC 2015, 28). According to their figures, there were 52.000 farming units producing twenty million tons of food in 1993. Although the number of farming units decreased to 40.000, they produced seventy-nine million tons of food. One hectare could produce six tons of maize in 2005 if the conditions were favourable, while in 2015 South Africa had the ability to produce ten to thirteen tons per hectare due to efficiency and increased technology (SAHRC 2015, 27).²⁶ Notwithstanding the potential unemployment as a result of less farms and more mechanisation, the nation’s food security seems not be threatened by less farmers.

²⁴ The presentation includes a chart and a combined graph. All figures match, except ‘Incidents 2016/2017’, with 307 incidents in the graph and 93 in the chart. It is this author’s unconfirmed assumption that 307 is the correct figure. Seen the steady decline since 2012, the median forecast would be 433 incidents. The 15.9% murder-to-incident ratio with 390 attacks corresponds more with the rest of the SAPS data as a 49,5% ratio would with 93 attacks, as well as ANI’s figure of 357. For these reasons, the figure of 307 incidents is used in this combined graph.

²⁵ Confirmed by figures used by AfriForum. See figure six.

²⁶ The SAHRC report mentions ‘six million tons per hectare’, but this author feels confident in assuming that ‘millions’ was added as mistake.

To conclude, the speech pointed out that issue of 'farm killings' has been thoroughly articulated into the bigger context, not only of rural crime, but criminality of the entire country. Furthermore, the existential threat of food insecurity seemed to be avoided not by security measures, but by technical innovation regardless of the security measures. Therefore, the issue had been effectively desecuritized through rearticulation.

10.2 SILENCING

However, to recall the final form is that of *silencing*, when an issue disappears or fails to register in security discourse as a strategy of exclusion. As stated by Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde, during the securitisation move an issue is dramatized, and presented as an issue of supreme priority. Thus, by labelling it as a security measure, an agent claims a need for, and a right to, treat it with extraordinary measures (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998). At the same time, to recall Hansen, one cannot desecuritize through speech act (Hansen 2012). Following this logic, one cannot trivialise a perceived existential threat through a speech act, and present it as an issue of inferior importance, not worthy the extraordinary measures that were taken to guarantee the referent object. Perhaps not within one speech act, but this is exactly the perception of elements within the original referent object and those who claim to represent them, especially since they still perceive racial and political motivations behind these incidents fourteen years after the 2003 Committee of Inquiry report.

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) published their report *Safety and Security Challenges in Farming Communities* in 2015. In this report, multiple organisations voiced their ongoing concern on the incidents on farms and smallholding. According to the Agri SA, the crimes in farming communities were not the result of hate or racial disharmony, although hate speech with strong racial undertones can be perceived as one of the reasons for the murders of farmers and workers. Furthermore, they remained concerned about the level of violence during these attacks (SAHRC 2015, 58). The TAU SA still voiced their concern regarding farm attacks, especially the fact that "far less farm workers are victims of violent crimes" despite such accusations from government officials, the "abnormal high level of brutality during these attacks", and that the perpetrator is known to the victim in a significant number of cases (SAHRC 2015, 55). The TAUSA sees an "obviously racial composition" in the "vast majority of victims of crimes" being white whilst "the overwhelming numbers of those who commit crimes are black (...)" which leaves very little arguments that (...) racial bias, which can be interpreted as hatred is prevalent" (Ibidem). Furthermore, "the level of physical abuse (including confirmed cases of deliberate torture) counters the popular statement that the motive (...) is common assault, robbery or theft" (Ibidem). Thus in their experience, little seems to

have changed as the level of assault and murder remains at the post 2004 average. The TAU SA further urged that the “clear and unambiguous political condemnation of farm attacks by the President and cabinet ministers (...) is urgently and consistently required. Their obvious silence (...) should be interpreted as non-verbal approval (...) resulting in a continuation of murder and mutilation. In the minds of some, the 1986 declaration of farmers as ‘legitimate targets’ may still be in force” (SAHRC 2015, 58). AfriForum recommended among other things that “politicians should be called to order”, as well as the treatment of farm attacks as priority crime, and the revision and implementation of the RSS (SAHRC 2015, 39). As far as the impact on the economy, the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry calculated that the permanent loss of a farm after an attack or murder would cost the economy R 1.932.869, - (€ 126.500, -) each year. If the loss of productivity is only temporarily, it would mean an estimated loss of GDP of R 161.072, - (€ 10.540, -) each month (SAHRC 2015, 38-39), used by AfriForum to stress the economic interests of better protection for farmers.²⁷

AfriForum had started a campaign in 2012 with two goals: the release of correct statistics on farm murders and attacks, as well as the prioritisation of these crimes. In 2016, this campaign proved to be successful. First, on 28 January the acting national police commissioner Lt-Gen Khomotse Phahlane, announced that farm murders, farm attacks, and livestock theft would be treated as priority crimes. Secondly, on that same day at a meeting with AfriForum, the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries announced that beside the SAPS promise, a joint effort against farm attacks and murders had to be made by role-players ranging from government and organised agriculture to community safety initiatives (AfriForum 2016a).²⁸ Thirdly, on 26 February 2016 the Pretoria High Court ruled that the SAPS must act in ordinance with the South African Promotion of Access to Information Act. In the previous year, the national police commissioner of the SAPS Riah Phiyega, declared that the SAPS still updated the statistics since 2007/2008 for operational reasons, but not for publication. As a result of this ruling, all annual statistics between 1990 and April 2015, from national, provincial and regional level down to the local police station were to be made available to public, as well as the methodology behind the gathering of the data and the processing thereof (AfriForum 2016b). Finally, on 4 May 2016 Commissioner Phahlane announced in his meeting with AfriForum that the SAPS had “identified incidents of crime and violence on farms and small holdings as an emerging priority in the current 2016/2017 financial year as part of our integrated approach towards eradicating crime and criminality in this country” (SAPS 2016). In this media statement, the final definition is given as used today by the SAPS, as:

²⁷ Assuming that all farming units contributed equally to the GDP, as well as other factors. See the SAHRC report.

²⁸ It is unclear if the term farm attack was used by the national commissioner and minister as the source is AfriForum.

acts of violence against persons residing on, working on or visiting farms and smallholdings; whether with the intent to murder, rape, rob or inflict bodily harm. These include farm owners, farm workers and all other citizens of this country, irrespective of race, colour, creed, religion or sex (SAPS 2016).

In addition to these acts of violence against persons, “all acts of violence against the infrastructure and property in rural communities aimed at disrupting legal farming activities as a commercial concern are also included” (SAPS 2016). Nevertheless, Van Zyl, who represented TAU SA in a meeting with the national priority committee on rural safety, remains sceptical. ‘And whilst it cannot be argued that at that level, it is regarded as a priority, as you go down into the structure, until you get to police station level in the rural area. Those guys have to comply with (...) 13 priorities, stuff like cash in transit (...). The manpower, and the logistics that they have available is not sufficient to ensure proper rural safety, especially in the farming areas’.²⁹

10.2.1 The figures, as given by TAU SA

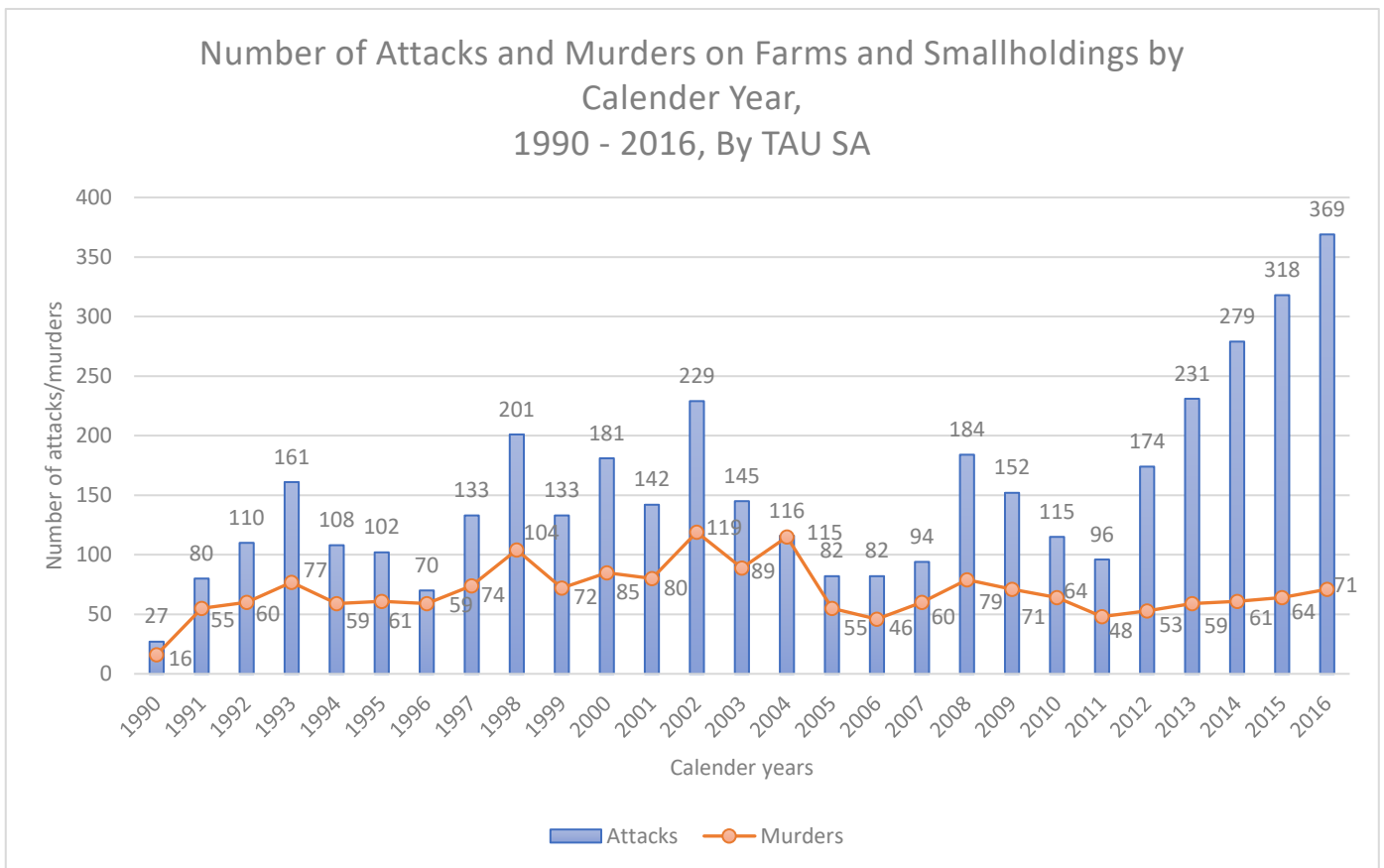


Figure 4 Number of attacks and murders on farms and smallholdings by calendar year, 1990 - 2016 (TAU SA 2017)

²⁹ Author’s interview with Maj Gen (ret) Chris van Zyl, Assistant general manager for TAU SA, on 10 April 2017.

According to TAU SA, the farm attacks and murders have not decreased in the past years based on their statistics. See figure 4. The assistant general director Van Zyl emphasised that his figures are ‘extremely conservative, because we are totally dependent on what we can pick up in the mainstream media, or what is reported to us via our members, or what we can pick up in the social media’.³⁰ He acknowledges that using the latter is complicated since ‘not everything that you read is the truth. So it needs to be confirmed.’ However, it does provide him with information because ‘generally speaking, if an attack occurs and the victim is not really a well-known person in that district, it rarely gets reported in the mainstream media.’ By April 2017, there were already 126 attacks with twenty-seven murders (TAU SA 2017)

TAU SA is the only institute that categorises the murder victims by racial category. According to their data, eighty-eight percent of the total victims of farm attacks is white. See figure 5.

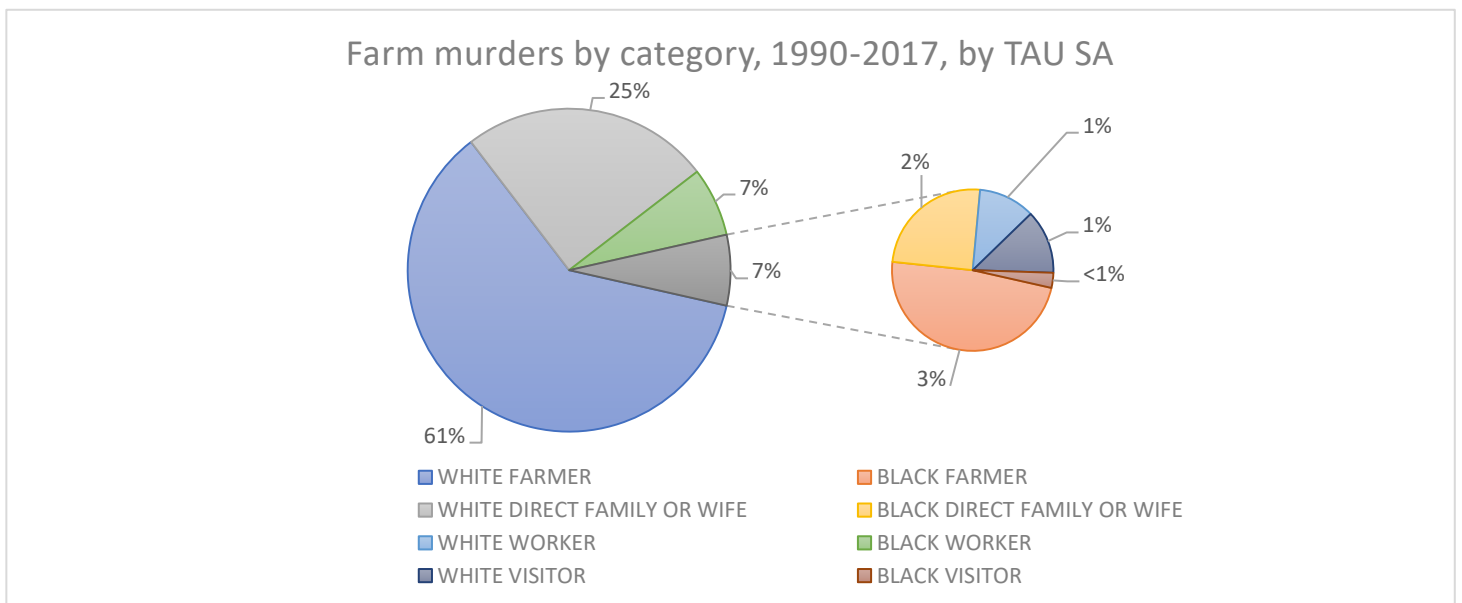


Figure 5 Farm murders by category, 1990-2017, by TAU SA (TAU SA 2017)

Thus, according to the statistics compiled by TAU SA, farm attacks and murders are on the rise, while the victims who get murdered are predominantly white, thus confirming the “obviously racial composition” in the “vast majority of victims of crimes” as was voiced to the SAHRC in 2015. (SAHRC 2015, 55)

³⁰ Author’s interview with Maj Gen (ret) Chris van Zyl, Assistant general manager for TAU SA, on 10 April 2017.

10.2.2 The figures, as given by the AfriForum Navorsings Institute

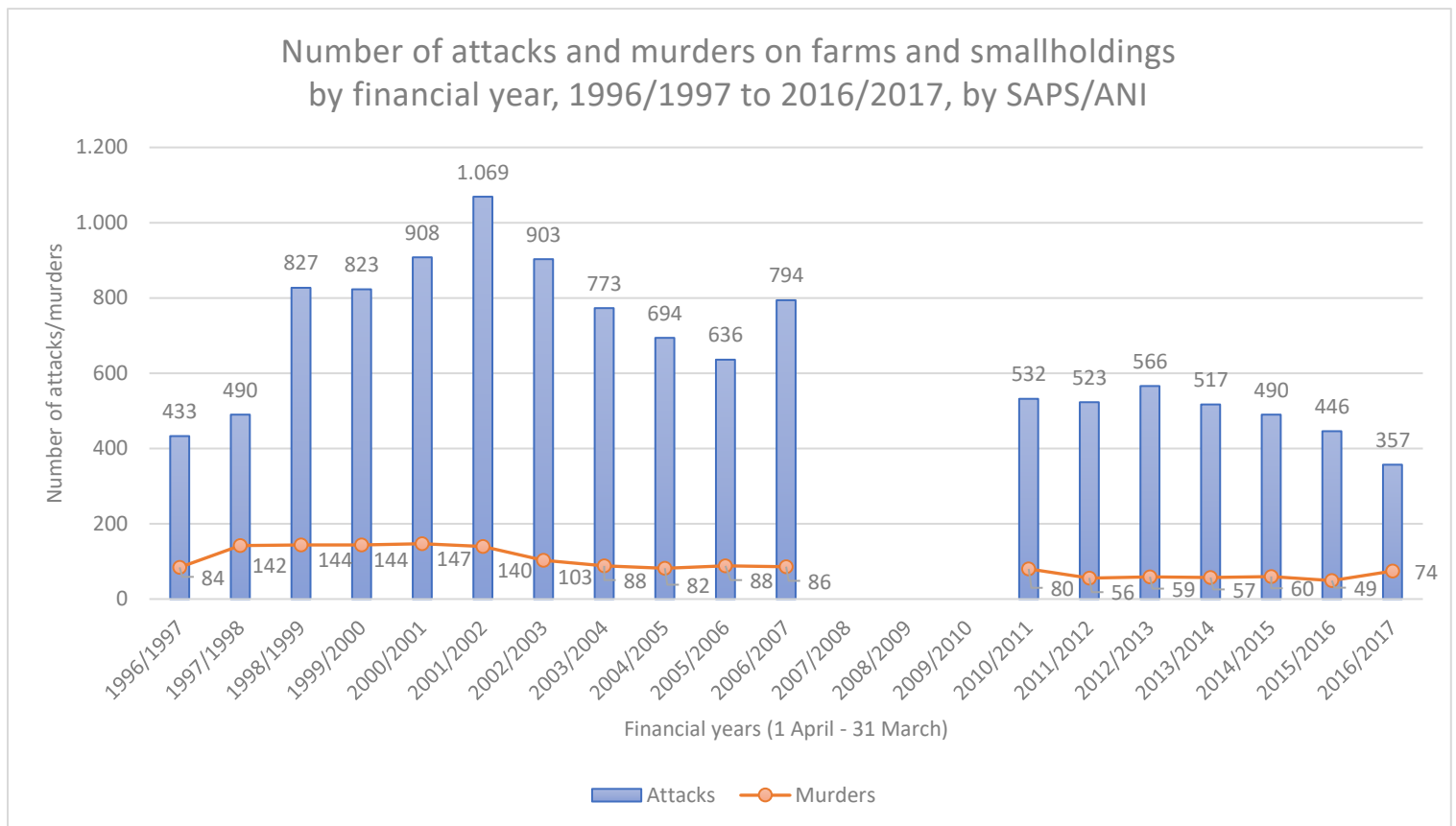


Figure 6 Number of Attacks and Murders on Farms and Smallholdings by Financial Year, 1996/1997 to 2016/2017, by SAPS/ANI (ANI 2017)

These figures are the SAPS statistics obtained by AfriForum through the court order of 2016 for 1996/1997 to 2015/2016³¹ Note that there is a small discrepancy between these figures and the figures used during the Parliamentary presentation. The official crime statistics for 2016/2017 were not released when the AfriForum Navorsings Institute (ANI), AfriForum’s research centre, published their statistics for 2016/2017. They do mention the parliamentary presentation statistics used for figure four with forty-six murders in 307 attacks. Based on their own statistics, the ANI sees the same decline in farm attacks from the previous year. However, their number of farm attacks is higher, and the ANI sees a “disturbing” rise of farm murders (ANI 2017, 4). This can be clearly seen by adding the ANI figure for the financial year 2016/2017 to the SAPS’s statistics, as seen in figure 6.

The data of the ANI has been compiled using “South African media (...), social media, the reporting of cases by existing security networks as well as victims and families of victims that directly report cases for record purposes. Incidents are verified and the facts thereof confirmed” (ANI 2017, 2). The ANI works together with TAU to correlate databases and verify incidents. The institute considers their statistics conservative, as there are “farm attacks of which there is no knowledge” (Ibidem).

³¹ See previous chapter.

According to Lorraine Claasen from the ANI, ‘there is a lot of discrepancies between the figures and we try to sort that out but that is a nightmare in its own.’³² The ANI uses the definition as given by the RSS in 2011. However, ‘a lot of the offices on station don’t know the definition so we have to go through all of the cases and categorise them with the police department.’ According to Claasen, TAU SA wouldn’t call it a farm attack if the attack occurred on a small holding that is not zoned by the municipality for agricultural purposes. That distinction ‘doesn’t matter’ to her. ‘I could be on a smallholding and my neighbour could be zoned, and then when I get attacked it wouldn’t be a farm attack? So that just doesn’t make sense for me.’ Smallholdings are on the outside of towns and further away from police stations and the urban areas, so in her opinion it would make sense that they are categorised together with the farms.

Based on their own statistics, ANI identifies a rise in farm attacks for the fifth consecutive year. See figure seven.

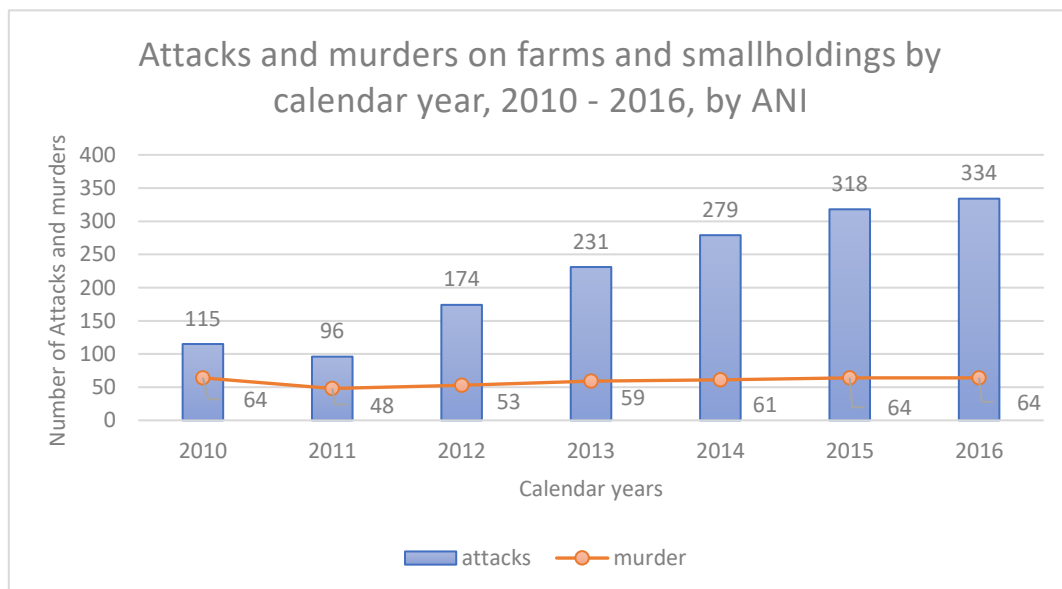


Figure 7 Attacks and murders on farms and smallholdings by calendar year, 2010-2016, by ANI (ANI 2017)

Thus, based on the statistics of the ANI in calendar years, there is still a rise in farm attacks while the number of murders remain high. The ANI claims that torture had been used in thirteen cases, using the example of Mr Lynn and Mrs Howarth, and explains that it is unknown in how many cases the victims know the perpetrators due to the increasing use of balaclavas (ANI 2017, 6).³³

The strongest evidence of the perception of being silenced was given two days after the parliamentary debate, when the deputy chief executive of AfriForum, Ernst Roets, published his study on the

³² Author’s interview with Loraine Claasen, a criminologist from the AfriForum Navorsings Institute, on 27 March 2017.

³³ For the example, see the foreword of this thesis.

correlation between political hate speech and farm attacks. According to Roets, “all of the most prominent cases of hate speech towards white farmers in recent years resulted in an increase in farm murders” (Roets 2017, 22). Despite the fact “that the extent to which farm murders are the result of political factors can be determined in full”, he argues that they do play a role (Roets 2017, 22) Roets refers back to the original 2003 report of the Committee of Inquiry, which refuted the racial and political motivations behind farm attacks. “While the value of this study is not to be underestimated, many of the conclusions drawn from the finding that 89,3% of farm attacks were motivated by robbery are fallacious, misleading and serve only as a barrier in the road to addressing farm attacks” (Roets 2017, 6).

[I]t should be noted that there are reasons to question the findings of a report that was drafted on the instruction of a government run by a party that has a vested interest in a finding that farm attacks are only motivated by robbery and not by political factors. If the report, that was drafted on the instructions of the ANC-led government, were to find that a significant amount of farm murders were in fact caused, motivated or influenced by political factors, it would imply that the ANC would have to do serious introspection on its continued scapegoating of white farmers for South Africa’s problems and its continued singing of songs in which the murder of these farmers is romanticised (Roets 2017, 6).

Roets argues that the findings on motives are questionable, as they could be deliberately withheld from the interviewees and that the motive of robbery might be influenced by racial hatred, or by the fact that many stolen items, especially vehicles, were simply deserted after the attack. Furthermore, the “extreme levels of violence and even torture are not considered in the finding regarding the motive”, nor “the drastic discrepancy between the extreme levels of violence (...) and the little value of stolen items” (Roets 2017, 6). Considering the general discussion on farm murders, Roets claims that “the observation (...) that black farmers are not subjected to the same levels of torture as white farmers” is almost never discussed (Roets 2017, 6).

The point is clear: While the findings of the report by the Committee of Inquiry into farm attacks are not to be dismissed outright, the fact that its findings on the motives of farm attacks have not been scrutinised for 14 years might have restricted the debate on farm attacks significantly (Roets 2017, 7).

Thus, as the perception of racial and political violence against white farmers was refuted by the 2003 report of the Committee of Inquiry, it greatly contributed to the desecuritisation through articulation of the issue by including it in the broader issue of rural crime, and ultimately national crime. The perception of some representatives of the original referent object is that fourteen years later the same

referent object is threatened by the same political and racial motivated violence. However, the findings of the 2003 report effectively denied the representatives any scientific foundation for their claims. Thus, as the integrity of the findings of this Committee is now openly questioned, it opens the door for the reinterpretation of the attacks and murders over the past twenty years. In this regard, by desecuritising the issue and dismantling the customised policy, one could argue that in the minds of some, the government has effectively desecuritisised through *silencing*.

10.3 CONCLUSION

The desecuritisation of the incidents on farms and smallholdings can be interpreted in two ways. First, by broadening the referent object from white farmers to the rural population and redefine the threat from political and racial motivated violence to criminality, the South African government *rearticulated* the issue and desecuritisised it. When debated in parliament, this rearticulation proved strong enough to prevent a new securitising move since farm murders are now to be understood within the bigger context of criminality of the country as the racial and political aspect of the murders was refuted back in 2003. However, there are representatives of the referent object who continue to see a clear political and racial component in these attacks. One of them, AfriForum, now openly questions the integrity of the findings in the 2003 report which contributed to the desecuritisation. Thus, as the customised policy was dismantled while the original issue remains, the redefining of the threat as common criminality by the government can be perceived as desecuritisation by silencing.

11 CONCLUSION

This thesis has reconstructed and analysed how the processes of securitisation and desecuritisation determined the policy against farm attacks from the government in post-apartheid South Africa. The aim of this thesis was twofold. From a historical perspective, this thesis reconstructed the processes that led to increased security measures to protect the farming community in South Africa from acts of violence, followed by a reconstruction of the gradual dismantling of said security measures, in a twenty-year timeframe. At the same, from a theoretical perspective, this thesis used this case as empirical research for the theoretical framework of securitisation and desecuritisation according to the Copenhagen School. Identified as one of the shortcomings of the original framework, a broader context was needed to analyse the initial act of securitisation. Therefore, a broader context gave historical and social context to the perceived fear of the white farming community of a politically motivated campaign to kill apartheid supporters and drive them off their lands. After the political transition in 1994, organised agriculture raised the issue of increasing number of attacks and murders to the national security structures, who, by agreeing to act upon it, moved the issue from the non-politicised to the politicised in 1997. One of the measures was the Rural Protection Plan with military reservist in policing roles as used during the Apartheid era, and the defining of this phenomenon against farm residents. Nevertheless, the killings continued, resulting in a Rural Safety Summit in 1998 where President Mandela securitised farm attacks by stressing the existential threat to the economy and of potential social instability, proving the legitimacy of the new inclusive South Africa by protecting the same communities who once were considered enemies by his political party's armed wing. As a result, farm attacks became a national priority, security structures were expanded and further research into the issue was demanded. Thus, this thesis argued that this is an empirical example of a complete securitisation as defined by Emmers.

Despite these measures, organised agriculture continued to perceive and claim racial and political motivations behind the increasing incidents. The government appointed an independent commission who conducted largescale research, resulting in the refuting of these claims on a scientific basis in 2003. Robbery proved the main motive, with merely two percent of all cases linked to political or racial motivation, while four in ten victims were non-white. As an act of violent crime, the definition of farm attacks included workers, family and visitors rather than the initial residents alone. Meanwhile, the political and social context demanded a more equal form of protection in the rural areas. The military reserve with their rural policing role were to be gradually disbanded, the police stopped publishing their rural crime statistics and a new Rural Safety Strategy was announced in 2011. This new inclusive strategy regarded the protection of forty-two percent of the population a priority, with no

specific security measures to specifically address the issue of farm attacks, which were rebranded as acts of violence against farms and smallholdings. Thus, as the existential threat of the initial securitisation proved to be almost non-existent, and the original referent object of sixty thousand commercial farmer was expanded to twenty-two million, this thesis argues that the government desecuritized farm attacks through rearticulation as defined by Hallen. This rearticulation proved strong enough, as a renewed effort to raise the issue in parliament was unsuccessful. The government could point to their own statistics as the number of incidents and murders on farms and smallholdings has effectively declined in the last fifteen years while emphasising that one particular group cannot be singled out when the issue affects the broader rural population. However, there remain non-state institutions that continue to claim racial and political motives in violence with predominantly white victims, linking political hate speech to increasing numbers of farm attacks. One organisation, AfriForum, now openly questions the integrity of the 2003 report. Thus, it may be argued that to some, as the customised policy of the securitisation was dismantled while the original issue remained, the desecuritisation through rearticulation can be perceived as desecuritisation through silencing.

Thus, to recall Lipschutz, winning the right to define security provides the authority to articulate new definitions of security (Lipschutz 1998, 9). The government was confronted with a threat based on the securitising actor's statistics and perception. In that specific historical and social context, the government had to react with the securitisation of this threat, in part because of the political and symbolic value these measures had. However, since the government could rearticulate the threat, they could rearticulate the referent object, thereby effectively desecuriting the original issue. As such, this thesis hopes to have addressed how the processes of securitisation and desecuritisation have determined the policy on farm attacks by the government in post-apartheid from a historical perspective. From a theoretical perspective, this thesis formed an interesting case study to test the framework of the Copenhagen School. To truly understand the processes at hand, the historical and social context in which these processes took place is essential. This proves once more that the criticism on the Copenhagen School for lacking context is justified. Furthermore, this issue saw the transition from the nonpoliticised to the politicised, to the securitised only to be desecuritized through rearticulation, contributing empirical research to both the securitisation as the underdeveloped desecuritisation framework. Most importantly, this thesis has proven that desecuritisation is not set in stone, and open for interpretation regarding how desecuritisation may be perceived. What may be seen by the government as a logical step to bring back into the normal political realm may be seen by others as an effective way to silence them. Therefore this thesis aims to be a contribution to the theoretical debate on securitisation and desecuritisation.

However, limitations of this research are fully acknowledged, as it only focussed on the security against physical harm. It proved impossible to incorporate other dimensions of this issue into this framework while still spanning twenty years. If, on the other hand, the focus would have been on a smaller timeframe, it would not have incorporated all the different forms of the securitisation framework, which is one of the reasons what makes this particular case so interesting. This is therefore only one side of the story, as multiple interpretations of security could have been the basis of this research. One could think of the security of identity, with the white farmer as personification of the Boer identity, threatened by the new reality of South Africa. Additionally, this research could have incorporated more role-players in the analysis, to determine how they influenced this process. However, as statistics formed the recurring element within this thesis, the decision was made to include the role-players that have, or had, compiled and used their own statistics as the foundation of their claims.

One recommendation for future research would be to include a wider or a different notion of security and a wider focus on the perceptions of more than just the identified role-players. By doing so, a more complete understanding of the process of securitisation could be realised. Furthermore, additional research could include important elements that are largely neglected in this thesis, as the influence of political hate speech, the land question, land invasions, rural poverty, illegal immigration and other factors that contribute to the perception of insecurity in the rural areas. Above all, this author would strongly recommend a new Committee of Inquiry to identify if the findings of 2003 are still relevant for the South African society today, and an independent and unbiased institute to monitor the statistics collected by the SAPS and the other agencies in order to reach a consensus on the scale of the issue.

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